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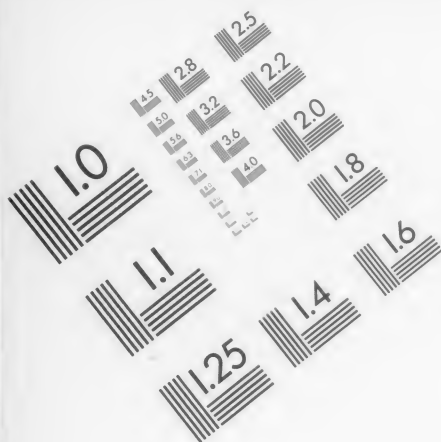
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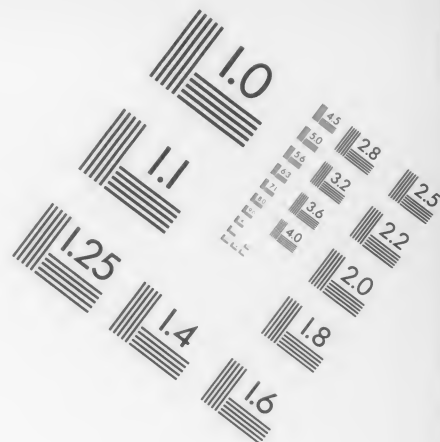


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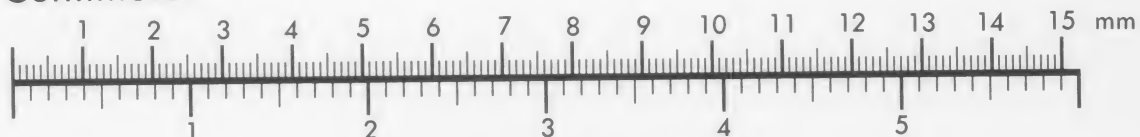
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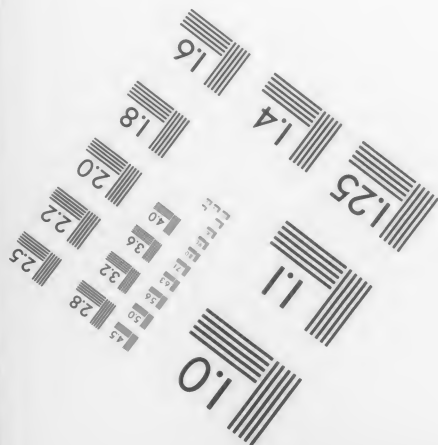
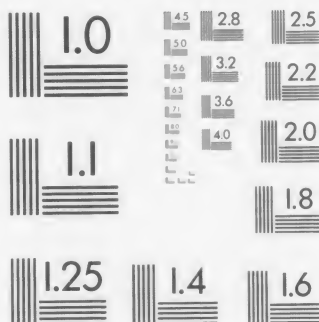
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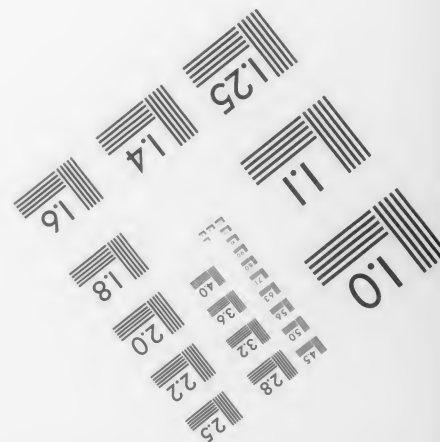
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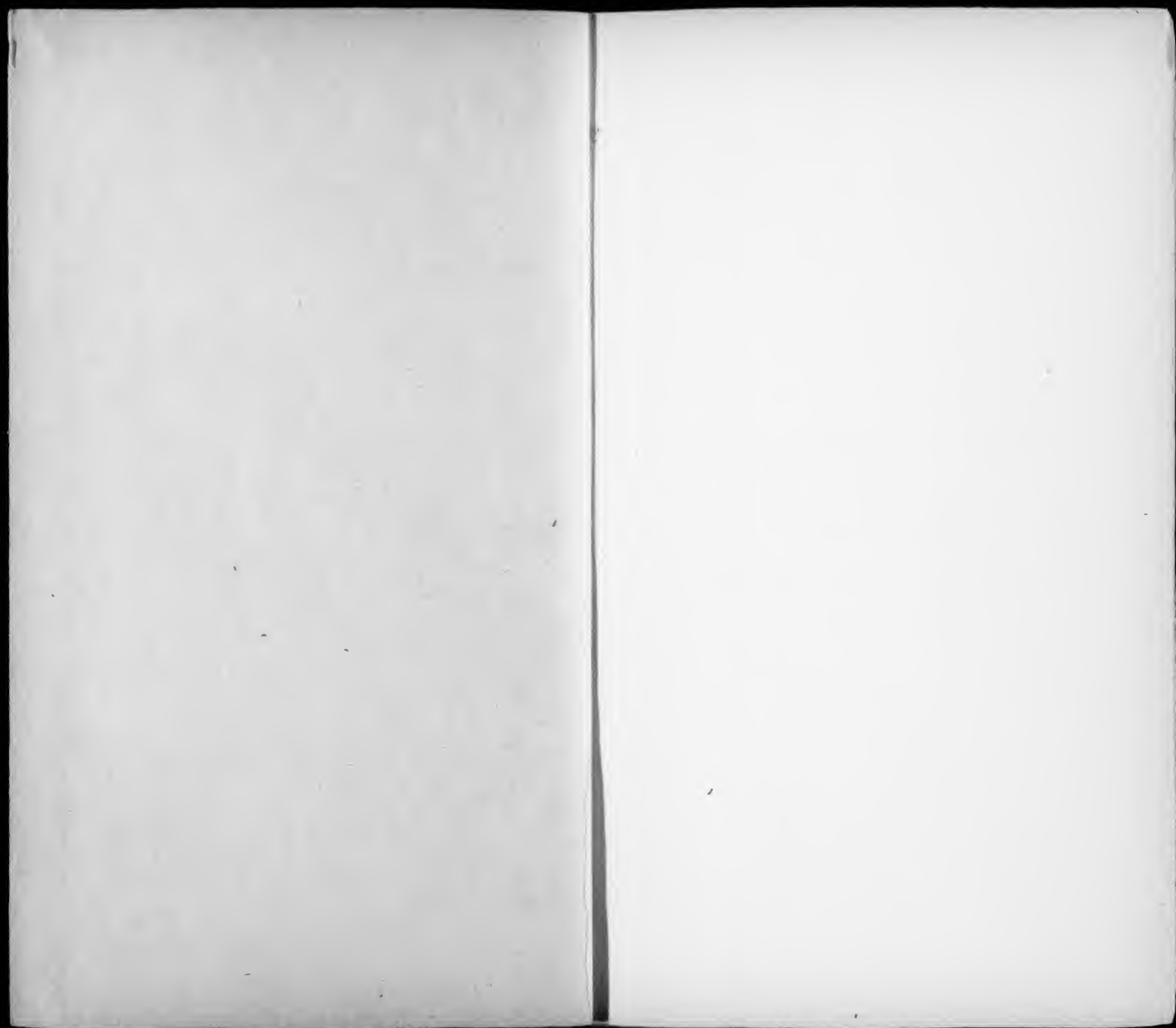
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THE GREAT CONDÉ

AND

THE PERIOD OF THE FRONDE.

# THE GREAT CONDÉ

AND

THE PERIOD OF THE FRONDE.

A HISTORICAL SKETCH.

BY

WALTER FITZ PATRICK.

VOL. I.

LONDON:  
T. CAUTLEY NEWBY, PUBLISHER,  
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1873.

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## THE GREAT CONDÉ AND THE PERIOD OF THE FRONDE.

### CHAPTER I.

THE House of Bourbon is descended from a younger son of St. Louis. Charles of Bourbon, Duke of Vendôme, who died in the year 1536, left three sons—Anthony, Duke of Vendome, who by his marriage with Jeanne d'Albret became King of Navarre; the Cardinal of Bourbon, whom the Catholic League afterwards proclaimed King of France in opposition to his nephew, Henry IV.; and Louis, first Prince of Condé. Louis embraced the reformed tenets, and was the leader of the Huguenot party in the religious troubles which broke out in France after the death of Henry II. He was an ambitious and turbulent prince of great courage and some capacity, but his fortunes paled

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before the splendid genius of Francis Duke of Guise. He was about to be led to the block in 1559, when the sudden death of King Francis II., throwing the reins of government into the hands of the Queen-mother, Catherine de Medici, gave him life and liberty. In 1562 he was defeated and taken prisoner by Guise at the battle of Dreux. After the assassination of the Great Duke by Palliot, an emissary of Admiral Coligni, while he was besieging Orleans in the following year, Condé again recovered his freedom, and held a leading position in the State until he was defeated and killed at the battle of Jarnac in 1569.

The son of Louis, Henry, second Prince of Condé, was brought up in his father's faith, in intimate association with Jeanne d'Albret, and her son, the young Prince of Bearn, who succeeded to the kingdom of Navarre at his mother's death in 1572. Henry of Condé shared the fortunes of his cousin after the massacre of St. Bartholomew, and during the early part of the wars of the League. He especially distinguished himself at the battle of Courtias in 1587. A few months after this victory he died at St. Jean d'Angely. The circumstances surrounding his death excited strong suspicion of foul play on the part of his wife Charlotte, daughter of the Duke of la Tremouille. She was accused of poisoning her hus-

band in order to prevent his discovering her adultery with a page named Belcastel, of which her condition was likely to afford conclusive evidence; and after a trial on this charge before a Huguenot tribunal at St. Jean d'Angely, was condemned to death. Being with child, she was respited pending her accouchement, and imprisoned in a tower of the town, where later in the year she gave birth to a son. In the meantime the Parliament of Paris, claiming exclusive jurisdiction over criminals of her rank, declared the sentence of death invalid on account of the incompetency of the court, and, as on the death of Henry III. in the same year the acknowledged princes of the blood, the Prince of Conti, the Count of Soissons, and the Cardinal of Bourbon, were Catholics; the Huguenots, reluctant to injure the claims of the princess's child as next heir to his cousin, Henry IV., allowed the judgment to remain dormant. The princess, however, remained a prisoner till 1595, when Henry IV., firmly seated on the French throne, feeling dissatisfied at the turbulent proceedings of the Court of Soissons, annulled the sentence of death. Although Henry had made no secret of his own conviction of her guilt, he granted Madame de Condé a new trial before the Parliament of Paris. The High Court declared her innocent, whereupon the King acknow-

ledged her son as first Prince of the blood, and caused him to be educated at St. Germain in the Catholic Faith.

The 16th century undoubtedly forms one of the most important epochs in the history of the world. Never, at any other period, has the human mind been more deeply stirred by questions of more tremendous moment; no other period has produced a greater number of extraordinary characters. But exactly in proportion to the vehemence of the strife which convulsed the leading nations of Europe, its passions, noble and ignoble, warped and clouded men's minds, and prevented their always estimating justly the characters of their leaders. The gods of the popular worship, as seen through the turbid haze of party enthusiasm, enthroned on lofty pinnacles, and radiant with undying glory, occasionally prove, in the clear atmosphere of historical truth, mean and groveling idols, having fronts of brass and feet of clay. With perhaps one exception, there is no public character of great mark that bears worse the strong light which modern research has thrown upon the 16th century than Henri Quatre, to whom flatterers have given the much-abused title of The Great. The exception is Queen Elizabeth of England, whose real character is so vividly presented to us in the confidential correspondence

of the singularly able and crooked statesmen, who, in their own interests, propped her throne, and were the sport and the victims of her cunning hypocrisy and capricious humours. Vain, false, cruel, crafty, inconstant, and sordidly avaricious, joining much that is most repulsive in the rioting passions of a fierce and gross masculine nature to the most unloveable failings of her own—the coarse ferocity and ruthless temper of F. VIII., to the fickle selfishness of a coquette, and the caressing guile of a tigress—these traits of Elizabeth's character are apparent, even from the reluctant evidence of modern historians of her own party. But we find scarcely a trace of the glorious intellect, not a glimpse of the greatness of soul, which popular fancy has attributed to the last of the Tudor sovereigns.

In truth, Henry's claims to the lofty titles which sectarian prejudice and national vanity have lavished on him rest on as slender foundations. He had the restless energy, the buoyant spirit, and the brilliant—if somewhat boastful—courage characteristic of the Gascons, with a sagacious sense and a strong love of his own interests, unclouded and unfettered by any motive or restraint, except the ephemeral chains woven by an insatiable propensity to gallantry. He had a pleasant wit, frank and familiar manners, not always

free from deceit, and, when his interests or his passions did not arouse what was tyrannical in his disposition, an easy good nature, which was prone to degenerate into weakness. What perhaps has contributed most to his wide popularity is the saying attributed to him, that he wished every French peasant to have a fowl boiling in his pot. This is one of those sounding sentiments of visionary benevolence which captivate the minds of men, especially of Frenchmen; and which, if it had expressed in any degree the policy of their ruler, would have entitled him to the gratitude of his subjects. But it was merely a gush of cheap philanthropy which he exemplified by loading his impoverished kingdom, desolated by the wars of the League, with excessive taxation, in order to extort the means of indulging his costly vices, and of plunging unwilling Europe, without any just pretext, into a desperate conflict, an earlier unchaining of the fiendish passions and the unutterable woes of the Thirty Years' War.

But circumstances were singularly favourable to Henri Quatre. The last three kings of the house of Valois, his predecessors and contemporaries, were among the least estimable of French sovereigns. The brilliant sceptre of Francis I. had descended to the vile brood of Catherine of Medicis, the sickly and feeble-minded

Francis II.; Charles IX., whose brief and unhappy life was a restless condition of morbid self-torture, passing at intervals from the sullen frenzy of brooding suspicion to the wild frenzy of unbridled rage; Henry III., the most infamous of mankind.

Before Henry IV. was entitled to claim the succession to the French crown, the family of Lorraine-Guise, the most illustrious on the splendid roll of French nobility—perhaps the most illustrious in modern annals—which had furnished two generations of champions and martyrs to the Catholic cause, the grand figures of the men towering above a race of giants, the women peerless in beauty, in cultivated intellect, and in the noble fortitude that vanquishes misfortune, had been robbed of its strength and its glory by the hands of assassins. A branch of the house of Lorraine, in comparison with which even the royal race of Capet was mean, the Guises traced back their august lineage through a long line of warrior princes to the Imperial figure of Charlemagne. By one of those strange revolutions which time brings about, the house of Lorraine, deriving its origin from the great Frank who re-established the Roman empire of the west—after many centuries of inferior, though not obscure, sovereignty—had risen again to the summit of greatness in three generations of

Roman Emperors, when the Imperial fabric crumbled beneath the sword of a conqueror greater even than Charlemagne. Francis, Duke of Guise is, by universal consent, one of the most splendid and stainless characters in history. He possessed in a superlative degree all the qualities that attract admiration and love, and his life was a noble example of public and private virtue. His six brothers stood in repute second only to him. The Cardinal of Lorraine, besides being renowned throughout Europe as a theologian and a scholar, was the most profound, vigorous, and accomplished statesman France has produced, with the exception of Cardinal Richelieu. Nor were the women of the family inferior to the men. For courage, capacity for government, virtue, and beauty, Mary, wife of James V. of Scotland, had no equal among the princesses of her time. The brilliant and engaging qualities, the ardent attachment to their faith, the deep mutual affection binding its members together in unwavering fidelity, the extraordinary majesty and beauty of person, worthy of its Imperial origin and Imperial spirit, that distinguished the entire family, gave it an indisputable pre-eminence which is recognised with an admiration rising to wonder in the diplomatic correspondence of the period.

The son of Francis, Henry Duke of Guise, if of

a character less lofty and pure than his heroic father, rivalled him in military and political genius, in the strength of his religious convictions, and in the splendour of his personal gifts. It is in reference to him that the Duchess of Retz, the most accomplished and fastidious lady of the court of Catherine of Medicis, and by no means a partial critic, says, "Those princes of the house of Lorraine have so noble and majestic a mien that in comparison to them, all other men appear plebeian and common." But when Henry of Guise fell in the hour of his triumph, perfidiously murdered by Henry II., as his father had been cut off in his career of victory by an assassin suborned by Coligni, the house of Lorraine-Guise and the Catholic cause fell under the leadership of the self-seeking and sluggish Mayenne. To Mayenne Henri Quatre was as superior as he was inferior to either Duke of Guise. At the very beginning of the struggle between them, when the chances of success seemed decidedly on the side of the Catholic League, Pope Sixtus V. said that the Bearnais must win, because he spent less time in bed than Mayenne did at his meals. In fact, when Henry had once made up his mind to conform to the Catholic faith, the issue of the conflict was no longer doubtful. And when France had again become united, and the religious passions of the

time began to cool down, the religious element which had been the essential feature of the Civil War was gradually lost sight of, or purposely disregarded in favour of the political element which had been an accident. The old national spirit of rivalry to Spain, which had been overpowered for a time by a still stronger sentiment, revived in all its former intensity. The ex-Huguenot leader was forgotten in the gallant king who had freed France from the domination of Philip II. National vanity, personified in later times by Voltaire, has invested the only sovereign of the disastrous period of French history that followed the death of Henry II.—whose character or capacity was not contemptible—with all the qualities that should adorn a sage and a hero.

Whether we regard Henry IV. from an intellectual or a moral point of view, his claims to greatness do not bear investigation. His talents as a ruler were not more than respectable. In the beginning of his reign, when his council was composed of men of but ordinary ability, and not always of ordinary integrity, his affairs fell into a state of frightful confusion, with which he was utterly unable of himself to grapple. It was only when he virtually surrendered the two great departments of the administration to two very able men—Villeroy, the most expert of politicians;

and Sully, stern, frugal, and unscrupulous, whose one rule of conduct was devotion to the interests of his master—that his government exhibited skill in diplomacy, or order in finance. And the most anxious cares of Sully were caused by the unkingly follies and caprices that constantly thwarted the great minister's labours.

The military talents of Henry were not of a high order. It is true that he won great renown as the victor at Arques and Ivry. And so far as the heroic spirit of a leader determines the fate of battles, he deserved his renown. But, besides that, whatever of warlike skill existed at the time in France, and perhaps at no period was French generalship at so low an ebb, had enlisted under the royal banner, Henry had on his side the sloth, the indecision, and the incapacity of his opponent, Mayenne. When pitted against the Duke of Parma, the contrast between the royal "Captain of Horse" and the consummate Spanish general was ludicrous. The ease with which the great master of war, although sinking under a mortal illness, twice led his small army from the Netherlands into the heart of France, baffling with the calm contempt of superior science every effort of the French King to retard his movements or compel him to fight, and, without a blow, raising the sieges of Rouen and Paris; his astonishing

feat of carrying his troops, which, during one of the paroxysms of his disorder, had been shut up without supplies and without apparent possibility of escape, in an angle of the Seine, near Rouen, across the broad and rapid river, in the face of his amazed foes, without the loss of a single man or a single gun; and the deliberate skill with which, when he had accomplished his objects, he slowly marched back again into Flanders, the whole chivalry of the kingdom following on his track in helpless rage and mortification, inflicted greater humiliation on the French arms than the loss of two pitched battles.

The moral character of Henry was despicable. The facility with which he changed his belief, as if it was merely a garment, outraged even the lax public morality of that age. The more distinguished leaders of the Protestant party throughout Europe, however eminent for parts and for force of will, were not, as a rule, influenced by deep religious convictions. As in the case of Maurice of Saxony, probably the ablest of them all, their religion was a part of their policy. They were statesmen who regarded the vehement theological ferment, that stirred in the minds of their followers, as a vigorous power, which, if skilfully directed, might achieve empire. But though for the greater part unencumbered with scruples,

they generally maintained in their outer conduct a decent show of conformity to the opinions and feelings of their adherents. Henry, however, with a cynical levity peculiar to himself, habitually adapted his creed to his interests. And to this shameless disregard of obligations, the most sacred amongst men, which enabled him to take full advantage of the sentiment of hereditary right, so strongly cherished by Frenchmen at that time, he owed his success, far more than to his political or military abilities. When established on the throne, his personal conduct as a ruler was seldom shaped in consonance with any standard of high principle or enlightened statesmanship. When he was not tyrannical he was weak. He was always selfish. The most sacred motives of justice and of honour, the longest and most brilliant services, weighed as nothing in his mind in comparison with the policy or inclination of the moment. He was easily moved to tears, to bursts of hysterical emotion at a grief that touched himself. He would weep piteously in recounting what he suffered from some ludicrous freak of a coquettish mistress. But he was incapable alike of large-minded benevolence, or of a generous and lasting attachment.

With the exception of the old Marshal Biron, who had died for his cause, no one had done more

to seat him on the throne than the Marshal's son, the Duke of Biron. They had long been sworn comrades and brothers-in-arms. Biron was vain and irritable. Rightly or wrongly, he entertained the belief that his services had not been sufficiently recompensed; that others less deserving had been preferred to himself. Smarting under a sense of injustice, he gave ear to the perfidious counsels of a secretary, and while commanding an army against the Duke of Savoy, allowed himself to be drawn into a treasonable correspondence with the enemies of France. The negotiations, however, were still incomplete when he was struck with remorse, and, repairing to Lyons, confessed his treason to the King. Henry, taken by surprise, fell on his old friend's neck in a passion of tears, and granted him full pardon. After the termination of the war, Biron, who had retired to his government of Burgundy, received an invitation from the King to repair to Fontainebleau. The missive contained the royal pledge that no harm should befall him. The Duke, contrary to the advice of his friends, went up to Court. He was received by Henry with a gush of tender affection, but after a few days, during which his movements were closely watched, he was suddenly arrested, and despite of pardon and pledge, was arraigned before the Parlia-

ment of Paris for the crime which had been condoned at Lyons, sentenced to death, and beheaded on the Place de Grève. It is true that Henry, who was keenly sensitive to the horror which this tyrannical act provoked throughout Europe, and to the feelings of indignation and distrust which it aroused in the French nobility, afterwards alleged, in his own justification, that proofs of new treasons on the part of Biron had come to light, and that the Duke's obstinacy in refusing to confess his guilt was the sole cause of his ruin. But Biron was entrapped by means of a formal pledge of safety sent to him by his sovereign when in full possession of all the evidence. He denied to his last breath the additional accusations, which rested on the unsupported testimony of his secretary and tempter, a man of infamous character, who had been bought, if not suborned, by the Duke of Sully. And the only really weighty charge preferred against the Duke at his trial, that which determined the judgment of the High Court, related to the acts which he did not deny, and for which he pleaded his sovereign's pardon. Unfortunately for himself, in his reliance on the King's faith, he had scorned the prudent advice of the Constable Montmorenci to demand an official pardon under the Great Seal, which could have been produced in evidence; and the

remorseless policy of Sully, which, aimed by a terrible example to strike dismay into the haughty and turbulent nobles who treated him with open disdain, worked on the jealous fears of Henry, and rendered Biron's confidence in his master fatal to himself.

Many other well-known incidents of his reign indicated, though in a less tragical way, how greatly, where the claims of past service and tried friendship clashed with a present purpose, Henry was prone to the ignoble vice of ingratitude.

But it is in his relations with the fairer half of his subjects which formed not the least important feature in the history of his reign, and brought him into disgraceful collision with his young kinsman, the Prince of Condé, that the true character of this king is most clearly seen. In truth, it is difficult to conceive two human beings more essentially different than the Henri Quatre of Romance, the soul of chivalry, the wise and magnanimous sovereign, the idol of the brave and the fair, and the Henri Quatre, mean-spirited, tyrannical, jealous, infatuated, supremely ridiculous, who has been sketched by the friendly pens of Sully, the Princess of Conti, Bassompierre, and others, among his most intimate associates. The slave of his passion for the sex, he seems never to have succeeded in gaining the love or respect of a

woman. It is not easy to say whether his marriages or his liaisons reflect more discredit on himself, or were more prolific of troubles to the State.

His first wife, the beautiful and accomplished Margaret of Valois, had been deeply attached in early life to Henry, Duke of Guise. Charles IX., her brother, incited to a frantic jealousy of his great subject by the arts of her second brother, the Duke of Anjou, threatened to kill Guise with his own hand if he persisted in a suit in which his affections were engaged; and is said to have resorted to personal violence to compel his sister to a union which she loathed. Despising and detesting a husband who took her for political convenience, and then in order to secure freedom in the pursuit of his pleasures, accorded her similar liberty of conduct, Margaret abandoned herself to shameless excesses. The marriage, irregular in itself, and endured with repugnance, proved unfruitful. Henry afterwards wrung from Margaret, when her kindred were all dead, and her friends alienated by her misconduct, a consent to a divorce, by threatening her with a public trial for the profligacy at which he had connived.

His second wife, Mary of Medicis, was a woman of high spirit and quick temper. The open insults passed on her by her husband and his

imperious mistress, the Marchioness of Verneuil, who publicly challenged the validity of her marriage, provoked her beyond endurance. The Court was torn by angry contentions. Domestic grievances generated dangerous political cabals, and the almost daily task of allaying the mutual animosities of the king, his wife and his mistress, severely taxed the patience and skill of Sully. Sounds of recrimination and violence frequently burst from the royal apartments. On one occasion Henry rushed undressed from his wife's bedchamber to complain to Sully that she had struck him in the face, and to concert measures with his minister for obtaining another divorce. So notorious were the quarrels of the royal pair, that on the assassination of the King, the crime was popularly attributed to the joint contrivance of Mary of Medicis and her former rival, the Marchioness of Verneuil, whom common thirst for revenge was supposed to have united for his destruction.

The lives of Henriette de Balzac, Marchioness of Verneuil, and Gabrielle d'Estrées, Duchess of Beaufort, belong to history. Both regarded Henry with indifference; both were reluctantly induced to accept a disgraceful position under pressure of a scandalous abuse of the royal authority, tempered by distinct promises of marriage. Gabrielle loved and was betrothed to the hand-

some Duke of Bellegarde, one of the great Catholic nobles who had remained faithful to Henry III. and after that monarch's death, loyally supported the Bearnais as legitimate king. Bellegarde, in the unreserved freedom of familiar intercourse, indiscreetly boasted to his sovereign and friend of Gabrielle's unrivalled beauty; and as Henry affected scepticism on the subject, invited him to come and see her. Henry came, saw, and was conquered. He immediately forbade the marriage, exiled the Duke, silenced the remonstrances of the lady's friends with threats of vengeance, and by every ungenerous and every unholy means which profligacy could suggest or arbitrary power compass, compelled her to consent to his wishes. She bore her chains for years, doing constant violence to her better nature and her inclinations, in consequence of his pledges to make her queen of France and legitimate her children. If ever Henry entertained anything approaching to genuine regard for a human being it was for Gabrielle d'Estrées. Her death, after horrible and protracted agonies, which seized her at the end of a banquet given to her on Thursday in Holy Week by the celebrated Zamet, a low-born Italian protégé of Catherine of Medicis, who, making the crimes and vices of the most infamous court of modern Europe the stepping-

stones of his fortune, had risen to be the greatest usurer and pander of his time, seemed to overwhelm her lover with grief. Henry declared, in a touching epistle to his sister, which was stained with his tears, that his heart was for ever broken; that it lay buried in his mistress's tomb. But when Sully, immediately afterwards, suggested to him that Gabrielle's death released him from the embarrassing consequences of the frequent promises of marriage he had made to her, he at once became cheerful. All the circumstances attending Gabrielle's death pointed to a foul murder. She had repeatedly exclaimed, in piteous tones, that she was poisoned. Although in a dying state, she had insisted, with the desperate pertinacity of extreme terror, on being removed from Zamet's house. Yet Henry stifled all inquiry, continued his patronage to the ill-famed but convenient Italian, and, before three weeks had expired, was using all the resources of force and fraud to win the person of Henriette de Balzac.

Henriette was a clever and brilliant coquette. She knew that the King was on the point of obtaining from the Pope the long-sought-for annulment of his marriage with Margaret of Valois; and she aspired to be Queen of France. Her connexions were high and powerful; and, before she would accept Henry's proposals, she

exacted from him a written promise, regularly attested, to make her his wife on condition that she bore him offspring within a year. She performed her part of the compact. He violated his without scruple; compelled the surrender of the compromising document by force; but was unable to prevent the outraged feelings of the lady and her kindred from raising up formidable troubles against his own peace and that of his kingdom during the remainder of his reign, or the shadow of illegitimacy from resting on his children by Mary of Medicis. The whole history of his relations with his two mistresses; his selfish tyranny; his doting weakness; the tricks they played him; their futile efforts to throw off a wearisome vassalage; his maudlin tears and his tragic airs; his ever restless jealousy, displaying itself now in mean espionage, now in acts of oppression towards suspected rivals; his total want of faith and honour; the incredible self-abasement with which he sacrificed his dignity as a man, and his duties as a sovereign, in vain efforts to propitiate his angry mistresses; even when softened down in the partial pages of his panegyrist Sully, would be infinitely amusing, if they did not form one of the most astonishing and humiliating pictures of human infirmity that the world has known.

But his conduct towards his young cousin, the Prince of Condé, stamps Henry's memory with even deeper dishonour. In the early part of the year 1609, there appeared at Court, in a ballet given by Mary of Medicis, a young lady, then about sixteen, of incomparable grace and beauty; Charlotte, youngest daughter of the Constable Montmorenci. The portraits of her that exist are disappointing; but it is clear from the enthusiastic description of Cardinal Bentivoglio, and other less grave chroniclers of that time, that nature had endowed her with extraordinary gifts of person and mind. The brilliancy of this new star dazzled the Court; and Henry, whose amorous temperament was unchilled by the frosts of nearly sixty winters, found his heart in a flame. Charlotte had been brought up in almost complete seclusion by her aunt, Diana of France, Duchess of Angouleme, at Vincennes; but the fame of her charms had spread abroad, and before she reached her thirteenth year, her father had been importuned with the most splendid offers for her hand. He had rejected them all curtly; but now, to the astonishment of every one, and of no one more than the fortunate object of his choice, he proposed her as a wife, with an enormous dower, to the Marquis of Bassompierre, the most brilliant of adventurers, whose attractive qualities had

taken by storm the eccentric old Constable's heart.

Bassompierre was a cadet of a poor family of the second order of nobility in Lorraine; his father had been in the service of Henry, Duke of Guise. About ten years before this time, he had made his appearance at the Court of France, a stripling of twenty, without money or interest. But he was one of the handsomest and wittiest men of the age, adorned with all the graces and accomplishments of a perfect courtier—brave, amiable, and politic. His shining qualities soon won for him a distinguished place in the favour of the King, who made him the companion of all his parties of pleasure; and it is a strong testimony to his tact and prudence, that he was not less the favourite of Mary of Medicis. Without possessing any patrimony, he rivalled in magnificence and profusion the greatest nobles of the kingdom. The means of his extravagance were supplied chiefly by his extraordinary luck at play. He relates in his memoirs that at the ceremony of the baptism of the royal children in the year 1606, his dress cost fourteen thousand crowns, an enormous sum at that time. When he gave the order to his tailor his whole fortune amounted to seven hundred crowns, but by the end of a month he had won enough to pay for the habit, and to

purchase a diamond-hilted sword, which completed his costume.

The King, seemingly over-joyed at the good fortune of his boon companion, at once assented to the marriage. But the connexions of the proud house of Montmorenci were furious, and conspired to break it off. Henry's passion for the young beauty was the talk of the whole Court, and they sought in the King's weakness the means of accomplishing their design. It was privately represented to him that the handsome, fascinating Bassompierre would infallibly win Charlotte's affections; that the contemplated union would be the death-blow of his own hopes. Before the day fixed for the nuptials, Henry, one morning before rising, summoned his favourite to his bedside. With abundance of sighs and tears, he confided to the astonished lover, as his dearest friend, his guilty designs upon this friend's affianced bride. In pathetic accents, he confessed his love for Charlotte, and his intention to reserve her to be the comfort and solace of his old age. He said that if the match proceeded, he and Bassompierre would be certain to quarrel; that he was resolved to introduce the young lady into his own family by giving her in marriage to the Prince of Condé, who, caring nothing for women, and devoting all his hours to the chase, would not be a

bar to his happiness. The sudden clouding over of the splendid fortune which had dawned upon him, for a few moments overwhelmed Bassompierre with grief and despair. But he reflected that ineffectual opposition would only ruin all his prospects in life. Recovering himself quickly, he replied, with the best grace he could, that he had long passionately desired an opportunity of evincing his devotion and gratitude to his master; an adequate occasion now presented itself, and he gladly sacrificed all his happiness in life to promote his sovereign's felicity. Henry embraced the unfortunate courtier tenderly, and forthwith commanded the marriage of Mademoiselle de Montmorenci with the Prince of Condé.

The young Prince and the Constable both demurred. The former was of a very shy reserved temper, and was painfully sensitive regarding the cloud that rested on his birth. The King's notorious admiration of the young lady excited his distrust; but a threat of imprisonment in the Bastille frightened him into acquiescence. An income of one hundred thousand livres was settled on him by the Crown, and the marriage was celebrated at Chantilly. A few days afterwards, the Prince and his wife were ordered to appear at some Court festivities; and Henry, discarding all the restraints of decency, openly displayed his passion for the

Princess in the most extravagant fashion. He indulged in such juvenile follies; he played such fantastic pranks, decked out in scented collars and gorgeous satin sleeves; he publicly raved in such wild, incoherent raptures, that Charlotte fondly believed his love for her had deprived him of reason. Her husband, frantic with rage and shame, ordered her to leave the Court; Henry ordered her to remain. Then came scandalous scenes of recrimination between the kinsmen, and tyranny on the part of the King. He stopped Condé's income, reproached him with the illegitimacy of his birth, and deliberated about shutting him up in the Bastille.

At length, through the interference of the Constable, the Prince was able to remove his wife to the Chateau of Muret in Picardy, and place her in charge of his mother. Charlotte does not seem to have entertained a very lively sense of gratitude for her husband's efforts in her behalf. Henry had calculated rightly that the union was not likely to be cemented by conjugal affection. She was pleased by the admiration she excited, and shuddered at the gloomy solitude of Muret, and the uncongenial companionship of her mother-in-law. Her royal adorer followed her in hot pursuit. On St. Hubert's Day the two Princesses came forth to witness a great hunt in honour of the

festival. Charlotte's attention was soon attracted by a *piqueur*, with a long beard and a large patch over one of his eyes, who was stationed at a little distance, with two dogs in a leash, and gazed upon her intently. A closer scrutiny enabled her to recognise the King under his disguise. The Princesses afterwards repaired for luncheon to a neighbouring chateau; and Henry, by the connivance of the hostess, feasted his eyes on the object of his adoration through a small hole cut in the tapestry of the saloon. He then rashly shifted his position to the window of an opposite apartment, and began gesticulating like a madman. But the Dowager Princess caught sight of him, carried off her charge in great indignation, and informed her son of the King's pursuit.

Condé saw that his only safety lay in immediate and secret flight from the kingdom. He pretended to his wife that he was about to return with her to court, for the accouchement of Mary of Medicis, in obedience to a royal summons; and, placing her, all joyful, in a coach, surrounded by his retainers, took the road to the Low Countries. The vehicle broke down on the journey; but Condé, allowing the princess scarcely a moment for repose, made her mount behind him on a pillion, and riding the whole of a wild November night through torrents of rain, succeeded in placing her,

half dead with cold and hunger, and devoured by chagrin, beyond the reach of his venerable rival.

The rapidity of his flight saved him from an unexpected danger. At the beginning of the journey the guide, suspecting its object, despatched his son in all haste to Paris to inform the King. The messenger arrived late at night at the Louvre, while Henry was at play with some of his courtiers. When the news was whispered in his ear he started up in great agitation, and called Bassompierre aside. "*Mon ami*," he said, "I am lost. Our man has lured his wife into a wood either to murder her or carry her off." He then rushed off to his wife's bedroom, and summoned all the ministers to attend him. Mary of Medicis had a few days before given birth to a daughter, and was still an invalid. When Sully arrived from the Arsenal, in very bad humour at the untimely disturbance of his slumbers, he found Henry pacing his wife's room with disordered air and incoherent mutterings, like a man distracted. The ministers stood in a row against the wall confounded and aghast, proffering contradictory counsels, all of which the King ordered to be immediately carried out. The poor Queen was looking on from her bed, a helpless spectator of a scene which was in itself one of the grossest outrages that could be offered to her. Henry, rushing

up to Sully, told him what had happened, and was coolly upbraided by the virtuous and grim-visaged minister for not having shut up the Prince in the Bastille. Then orders were despatched to the garrisons on the Flemish frontier for the arrest of the fugitives; and so rapidly were these commands conveyed that Condé did not cross the frontier a moment too soon.

The Archduke Albert, son of the Emperor Maximilian II., and his wife Isabella, daughter of Philip II. of Spain, were at this time joint Sovereigns of the Low Countries. It was known to them that the French monarch had completed his formidable preparations for a war against the house of Austria; and therefore the appeal which the French Prince addressed to them for protection, on entering their dominions, was extremely embarrassing, as being likely to furnish a pretext for aggression. However, chiefly through the influence of Isabella, permission was accorded to Condé to place his wife under the charge of his brother-in-law, the Prince of Orange, at Brussels; and after some difficulty and delay he was allowed to repair thither himself. Henry sent de Praslin, the captain of his Guards, and afterwards the Marquis of Cœuvres, on special missions to the Flemish Court, to persuade his injured cousin to return with his wife; and in case of

refusal, to proclaim him a traitor, and require the surrender of the exiles from the Archduke under threat of war. Condé, proving deaf to solicitation and menace, Cœuvres demanded an audience of the Flemish Sovereigns, and insisted in peremptory terms that the Princess at least should be delivered up to him. The Archduke Albert politely excused himself from separating a wife from her husband; but the spirit of Isabella the Catholic, flashed out in the response of the Archduchess. "I think," she said, "such a demand a very ludicrous and unusual article in the instructions of an ambassador. I am a Spanish woman, and do not deem myself obliged to act as pander to the unrighteous passions of your King." Without waiting for a reply she turned her back on the rebuked Cœuvres, and left the room. The French envoy then, with the connivance of the young Princess, arranged a plan for carrying her off from the Hotel of the Prince of Orange. The plot was skilfully contrived, and would probably have succeeded had it not been betrayed by Mary of Medicis to the Flemish Embassy at Paris. The result was that the Archduchess, under pretext of doing honour to her guest, invited her to take up her abode in the Royal Palace, and assigned her apartments adjoining her own. The grief and mortification of Madame de Condé were great.

Henry was frantic. He had Condé attainted and sentenced to death as a traitor by the Parliament of Paris. He wrote with his own hand intemperate despatches to his representatives at foreign Courts, in which, to the especial amusement of his own subjects, he expatiated in the bitterest terms on the mutinous spirit and the ingratitude of the first Prince of the Blood. And so threatening were his demonstrations against the Flemish Government that Condé found it expedient to retire to Milan, leaving his wife under the guardianship of the true-hearted Isabella. When her husband had departed, Charlotte, at the instigation of the French agents—who were allowed free access to her—signed a petition to the Pope for the dissolution of her marriage. It must be said in her favour that the Prince's disposition and appearance were eminently fitted to repel the affection of flattered young beauty; and that she was led to believe that, should her suit prove successful, Henry would repudiate Mary of Medicis and make her Queen. But the murder of the French monarch by Ravaillac, on the 14th of May, 1610, in one of the narrow streets of Paris, dispelled her ambitious day-dreams. This tragic event—one of the strangest fulfilments known of the predictions of astrologers—secured the peace

of Europe for another decade. Though he had not issued any declaration of war, Henry, when he fell, was on the eve of setting out to execute the ambitious and somewhat quixotic designs he had laboriously and, as he thought, secretly matured for the destruction of the house of Austria. He had concluded alliances for the partition of the expected spoils with Savoy, Venice, and the Protestant States of Northern Germany. Two large and well-appointed French armies only waited the word of command to march into Germany and Italy; and the enormous treasure amassed by Sully's oppressive measures of finance was sufficient to support an obstinate struggle. Patriotic French writers have lamented this monarch's untimely fate as a national calamity, in having delayed the ascendancy which, fifty years later, their nation acquired in Europe. But it was most fortunate for France that her part in a great European conflict was deferred for twenty years. The Spanish infantry was still invincible. Neither Henry nor any of his generals was at all capable of coping with Spinola; nor was there, as yet, a Gustavus Adolphus in the North to scatter the disciplined armies of the Emperor. The foundation of French supremacy required a more favourable conjuncture of circumstances, and the

agency of splendid and daring genius; the political genius of Cardinal Richelieu, and the military genius of the Great Condé.

After the death of Henry IV., Condé returned to France, and played a prominent part in the troubles that agitated the Regency of Mary of Medicis. He was a prince of considerable ability, and of a sagacity almost unerring to discern, amidst the turmoil of faction, the course most conducive to his own interests. Inheriting a very scanty patrimony, the great purpose of his life, of his habitual adulation of a strong government, and his habitual caballing against one which was weak, was the accumulation of wealth and dignities. And so skilfully did he steer his fortunes amidst the political shoals and quicksands of the perilous times in which he lived, so sedulously did he shift his sails for every favourable breeze, and so well was a grasping ambition seconded by economy which bordered on parsimony, that, long before his death, he held conjointly many of the greatest posts in the kingdom, and had amassed a colossal fortune.

His prudence, however, was not always able to ward off the reverses which chequer even the most successful careers. In 1616 he was arrested at the Louvre, by order of Mary of Medicis, and flung into the Bastille; from which fortress he was

afterwards transferred to the Castle of Vincennes. Up to this time, the feud with his wife had been festering; her suit for a divorce was still pending in the Ecclesiastical Courts. But the Princess no sooner learned that misfortune had overwhelmed her husband than she hastened to his side. Compassion awakened in her breast the true instincts of a wife, and taught her to cherish ties she had striven with such impatience to rend asunder. The Regent would only permit her access to the Prince on condition that she remained to share his captivity. She consented to this sacrifice without a murmur, and, burying her youth and beauty for three years to brighten the gloom of his prison, won as much of his regard as it was possible for a woman to win.

Of several children, who were the fruit of this reconciliation, the eldest surviving son, Louis of Bourbon, Duke of Enghien, was born on the 7th September, 1621. His constitution was originally exceedingly feeble; but judicious nurture in the pure air of the Castle of Montrond in Berri strengthened it to such a degree, that in after life he was capable of bearing the most extraordinary fatigues. From his early childhood there were discerned in him flashes of the quick genius and the haughty temper that characterised his manhood. In the Jesuit College at Bourges, where

he was educated, he is said to have excelled all his companions in scholastic and scientific attainments, as well as in manly accomplishments. The house which he inhabited in the town, built by Jacques Cœur, the famous financier of the reign of Charles VII., was a magnificent relic of feudal architecture, and bore on its front in letters of stone the motto of the minister, "*A cœur vaillant rien impossible.*" No doubt this noble sentiment fed the aspiring fancies of the future hero. In the year 1639, when yet but eighteen years old, Enghien was summoned to take part in public affairs. The "Thirty Years' War" was raging in Germany. France, under the guidance of Cardinal Richelieu, had allied herself with Sweden against the Emperor and, later on, with Holland against Spain. The Prince of Condé, whose craving for military distinction far exceeded his military capacity, having obtained the command of the French army of Roussillon, delegated the government of Burgundy to his son. In the following year, the young Duke made his first campaign under Marshal La Meilleraie, in Flanders, with great distinction. On returning to Paris, he went to Ruel to visit Cardinal Richelieu.

This great minister was now at the summit of power and glory. He had apparently trodden out the last embers of opposition in France. All

classes, from the King to the peasant, bowed to his resistless will. His colossal schemes of policy had already been crowned with splendid success. At home, he had crushed with an iron hand the military republic which the Huguenots had established in the heart of the kingdom, and shattered the feudal dominion of the great nobles. Abroad, the fortunate star of the house of Austria had grown pale in the blaze of his genius. He had heard much of Enghien's ability. To test it, he engaged him for several hours in a discussion on the most difficult questions—religion, war, politics, government; and his reported comment on the conversation is so flattering to his visitor, that the very warmth of the panegyric suggests doubts as to its authenticity. He is said to have remarked to his favourite Chavigny, that Enghien would be the greatest man of his time, perhaps of any time, in all things. It is certain, however, that the young prince made a most favourable impression on him. It was a great object of his ambition to ally his family with the royal blood of France. The Prince of Condé, with the keen instinct of self-aggrandisement peculiar to himself, divined this wish, and humbly besought the all-powerful minister to consent to a marriage between his niece Claire de Maillé Brezé and Enghien. Claire, who was but thirteen years old, and child-like for

her age, inspired Enghien with a feeling of contemptuous aversion. But the reluctant bridegroom did not dare to offer remonstrance, and, notwithstanding the tender years of the young lady, the marriage was celebrated in the King's chapel in February, 1641.

The year following Enghien accompanied Louis 13th in the successful campaign which added Roussillon to the French crown. When the armies had retired into winter quarters, he became, it is said, the chief actor in a ludicrous interlude, which furnishes an amusing illustration of the remarkable ascendancy of Richelieu.

In passing through Lyons, on his return to the capital, he had neglected to pay his respects to the Cardinal Archbishop of the city, who was the brother of the Prime Minister. The latter, when Enghien next went to visit him at Ruel, inquired after his relative; and the Duke was obliged to confess his sin of omission. Richelieu made no remark at the moment, but afterwards mentioned the slight in angry terms to the Prince of Condé. The Prince, terrified to the last degree, ordered his son instantly to repair the neglect; and Enghien, in obedience to the paternal injunction, started off without delay to Lyons—a journey of two hundred leagues, over execrable roads, rendered almost impassable by the rains of

autumn. The Archbishop, having been seasonably forewarned of this pilgrimage, seized, perhaps, with more than usual compassion for his hungry flock, or anxious to escape so much honour, considerably set out for Marseilles. Here, at the utmost verge of the arch-diocese, he received his distinguished visitor with a truly edifying humility. When Enghien had returned to Paris from his penitential mission, Richelieu, labouring under a second access of fraternal solicitude, renewed his inquiries; but on learning from such an excellent authority as the son of the First Prince of the Blood that the Archbishop was in perfect health, he appears to have recovered his wonted composure.

At the end of the same year the great Cardinal died, worn out by the attacks of an excruciating malady. On his death-bed he recommended Cardinal Mazarin to Louis XIII. as his successor; and Mazarin, in order to secure his unstable position by the powerful support of the House of Condé, obtained for its young heir the command of the army which was opposed to the Spaniards on the Flemish frontier. Enghien, having thus attained the great object of his young ambition, set out early in the year 1643 for the scene of action, a field on which he was to reap immortal glory.

The empire which the Spaniards reared during the 15th and 16th centuries, was, perhaps, the most splendid and far-spreading that the world has ever seen. It comprised the most beautiful, flourishing, and civilized regions of Europe. It spread over rich and extensive islands, breathing the fragrance and bright with the glowing vegetation of a tropical clime; some of which, until the close of the 15th century, had slept in virgin beauty, still fresh from the hand of Nature, in the embrace of an unknown ocean. And beyond this ocean it extended over boundless realms of a new world, the wealth and magnificence of which were hardly exaggerated by popular fancy that pictured them paved with gems, flowing with rivers of gold, realising the enchanted dreams of Eastern poets. Every sea of which the enterprise of Europe had made a pathway was subject to Spanish sway. It was the Castilian who first uttered the proud boast that on the dominions of his sovereign the sun never set. Profound statesmanship and consummate military skill were the architects of this splendid fabric; as they had built up other vast empires long crumbled into dust. In truth, not even Rome, in her palmy days, produced, within an equal period, a larger number of great public men than the Spanish Monarchy could show during the glorious reigns of Ferdinand

and Isabella the Catholic, Charles I., and Philip II. Standing out in brighter radiance from the illustrious throng, are the undying forms of the Emperor-King, Gonsalvo of Cordova, Christopher Columbus and Hernan Cortes, Cardinals Zimenes and Granvelle, Alva and Pescara, Don John of Austria, the type of Christian heroism, Alexander Farnese, the type of the finished warrior and statesman. And Spain can point with pride to what Rome never possessed, a splendid original literature and a splendid school of art.

But, in addition to the genius for command, and the practical energy which are common in a greater or less degree to all conquering races, there was in the Spanish Monarchy a peculiar and vital element, which constituted at once its strength and its idiosyncrasy. This was the spirit of enthusiasm, religious and romantic, which had informed its growth, and which vivified its maturity. For more than eight centuries the peninsula had been the battle-ground of the Crescent and the Cross, the theatre of a long crusade. In the 7th century the Arabs crossing over from Africa, overturned the kingdom of the Goths, and established on its ruins the magnificent Empire of the Western Caliphs. Christianity and Gothic freedom, driven from the plains, retired into the Northern Sierras, and throned in these "eternal

palaces of nature," breathed indomitable valour into generations of heroes, who descended year after year to maintain a desperate struggle for their country and their God. From the day on which the standard of Don Roderick was cloven down on the banks of the Guadelete, to that on which the standard of Ferdinand and Isabella floated by the side of the Cross from the walls of the Alhambra, the Holy War raged with little interruption. During this long period the sublime frenzy, born of burning faith and restless daring, which, seizing at intervals, like an intermittent fever, on colder nations of Europe, had whitened the plains of Asia Minor, and the Syrian and African deserts, with the bones of myriads of warrior-pilgrims, was in the Spaniard but the natural pulsation of life. His whole career was a combat for glory and the Cross. In him the spirit of chivalry found its grandest and purest embodiment. He lived in an ideal world—in the charmed land of Romance. Even the common incidents of war, touched by the magic hues of his fancy, were invested with an unreal aspect; while his bold, imaginative temperament, kindled by peril and exalted by faith, indued him with power to accomplish, in his long struggle with the Moors, feats which read on the sober page of history like the myths of heroic fable. And after

Grenada had fallen before the arms of Ferdinand and Isabella, this adventurous spirit and this fervid zeal sought out and found a wider field of action. Little bands of warriors, bearing the banner of the Cross, launched out upon the bosom of a trackless ocean, and discovered and conquered for Catholicity and Spain realms richer and more vast than had mocked the dreams of Alexander. It was soon apparent, too, in European warfare, that no other troops could withstand the shock of battalions, in which the fierce enthusiasm of the crusader, curbed by a perfect discipline, had melted into the calm feeling of invincibility inspired by a hundred victories. Wherever the Spaniards fought they conquered; and in fifty years after the downfall of Grenada they had won the most splendid empire that the world had seen since the Goth had scaled the Alps, and the Hun had stalled his war steed in the palaces of Caesar.

The great empires of the earth have each had a peculiar mission: each has been an instrument fashioned by a Divine hand for the achievement of some special design, accomplished by the force of its own natural development. The events of the 16th century called into play, in all their vigour, the characteristic genius and the matured energies of the Spanish monarchy.

The 16th century was for the Catholic church

a period of marvellous peril, and still more marvellous triumph. Century after century had the storms of the world raged in wild fury around the chair of Peter; but never since the terrible times when the Christian slave slunk tremblingly at night from out of the marble palaces of Imperial Rome, to worship amidst the bones of martyrs in the gloom of the Catacombs, had its deep foundations been assailed by so rude a tempest. At once, from every point of the horizon, the wide ruin burst upon it. North, South, East, and West, hereditary foes, or revolted subjects, the Christian and the Infidel, conspired its overthrow. In Germany, the Reformation, arising like a wintry torrent which leaps forth from a scanty spring and gathers volume as it rushes on, rolled its turbid tide over the greater part of civilized Europe, until its baffled waves surged against the impassable barriers of the Alps and the Pyrenees. In the East, Solyman the Magnificent, the greatest of the able and warlike line that filled the throne of Mahomet II., conquered Hungary, captured Rhodes, and avowed the design of planting the standard of the Prophet on the Palatine. From the South, Barbary Corsairs ravaged with impunity the beautiful shores of Campania, and swept shrieking peasants into captivity from beneath the walls of Rome. At

one time it seemed well-nigh certain, humanly speaking, that victorious Protestantism must trample the Papacy under foot. For a considerable period, it was probable that the lapse of a single year might see the Crescent glittering above the ruins of St. Peter's. But to the Catholic the event of this mortal conflict only furnished another proof of the weakness of human power, and the folly of human policy, when directed against a supernatural institution, built and sustained by Divine hands. It confirmed his belief that there is in the bosom of Catholicity a spring of immortal life which neither external force nor internal corruption can destroy. The sacrilegious hand that would break up the fountain causes it to flow in purer and more abundant channels. Gaudy weeds, nourished by the foul breath of the world, may, indeed, for a time, mantle and choke it with their rank luxuriance; but the keen blast of adversity shrivels them up, and the living waters leap forth again, bright and joyous, an eternal source of youth and vigour. The Church, quivering in every member, but aroused from a fatal lethargy by the shock of so many enemies, armed herself with her keenest weapons. The efforts of her faithful children first stemmed, then rolled back the tide of destruction that had threatened to overwhelm her. And in

this terrible struggle her foremost champions in spiritual warfare, as on the field of battle, were Spaniards; the great Spanish monarchy was her right arm and her shield. At the danger of the Church the old crusading spirit which had so often kindled the Spaniard's blood into fire leaped with electric power through every rank, from the peasant to the King. Spain drove back Protestantism in France and the Netherlands, and gave the mightiest impulse to the great Catholic reaction, which advanced with victorious banner to the borders of Scandinavia. From her ports went forth the illustrious Captain and the bulk of the great Armada that shattered the Ottoman power at Lepanto. And it was a Spaniard, at once the truest representative of the religious spirit of his race, with its lofty enthusiasm, its disciplined strength, and its indomitable energy, and the grandest religious figure of modern times, who founded the order of Jesus, the history of which is the history of the triumphs and the reverses of the Catholic Church in every region of either hemisphere.

Between this great monarchy, from its earliest consolidation, and the neighbouring kingdom of France, there had existed an intense national rivalry. At first the conflict was not unequal. The struggles of the two nations for superiority

deluged a large part of civilized Europe with blood, and especially desolated the classic land of Italy, where genius, drinking at perennial fountains of inspiration, has in every age crowned the indestructible beauty of nature with imperishable garlands. But, after a time, the preponderance of Spain became unquestionable. Her vast resources, the profound policy of her rulers, the consummate ability of her generals, the disciplined valour of her troops, filled the rest of Europe with a well-founded fear that she would achieve universal dominion. In the obstinate and often-renewed warfare the power of France was crippled by memorable reverses at Pavia and St. Quentin. The Huguenot convulsion which followed the death of Henry II. prostrated her at the feet of her hereditary foe. But after the death of Philip II. of Spain his throne was occupied by a degenerate line, and the influence of a pure despotism, administered by weak and corrupt hands, was apparent in the rapid decay of his empire. The liberties of Castile cloven down under the regency of Cardinal Zimines at the battle of Villalar, the liberties of Arragon crushed by Philip II., had never been permitted to bud forth again. The old crusading spirit was now out of date. The monarchy had accomplished its peculiar mission; the great Catholic reaction had

spent its force. There no longer existed within the state either a strong vital principle or a regenerating element. With the hardy love of adventure, born of popular freedom and elevated by religious zeal, the lust of conquest had also passed away. The riches of Mexico and Peru enervated the iron energies which a world in arms could not subdue. And when the mighty genius of Richelieu, having stifled anarchy at home, directed the united strength of France to humble her old rival, it was seen how languid was the life-current that animated a colossal frame; how rapidly the powerful empire of Philip II. was collapsing into a nerveless mass, terrible only in the prestige of former glories. Still, however, the superb monarchy preserved its vast proportions. Internal revolution or foreign aggression had, as yet, scarcely torn a gem from the haughty diadem of Spain and the Indies. The fairest regions of Europe, the realms subdued by Cortez and Pizarro, where the soil teemed with precious stones and the rivers flowed over sands of gold, remained subject to its sway. Castilian pride and prowess still awakened emotions of hatred and fear in every known region of the globe.

The Spanish army which Enghien was charged to oppose consisted of twenty-seven thousand veteran troops under the command of Don Fran-

cisco de Melo, an experienced general. De Melo had laid siege to Rocroi, a frontier town of considerable strength, embosomed in the forest of Ardennes. It was the key of the province of Champagne, and its capture would open the road to Paris. The young duke marched with twenty-two thousand men to relieve the place; and neither the news of the death of Louis XIII., which reached him on his way, with positive orders from the Government not to risk a battle, nor the cautious counsels of the old Marshal l'Hopital, who had been appointed to restrain his well-known impetuosity, checked the rapidity of his movements. He was determined to fight at all hazards.

The Spaniards had pitched their camp on an uneven plain of small extent, surrounded on all sides by woods and marshes, and crowned by the beleaguered fortress. Their position, which could only be approached through a narrow defile, was naturally almost impregnable. But De Melo was himself too anxious for battle to avail himself of his advantages of ground for the purpose of defence. Confiding in the superior numbers and the tried valour of his troops, and well informed of the critical state of affairs in Paris, he had resolved to terminate the war by a decisive blow. He therefore permitted the French army to pour without molestation through the narrow pass, and

encamp on a small eminence fronting his own position. Evening was closing in, and both sides prepared for a decisive battle at break of day.

Marshal l'Hopital, terrified at Enghien's rashness in exposing his troops to the assault of a superior enemy in a position in which defeat was destruction, earnestly besought him to draw back while there was yet time. But the duke, surrounded by young French nobles as eager for glory as himself, and having the support of General Gassion, the most able and enterprising of his lieutenants, peremptorily over-ruled his mentor's opposition. He had determined to return to Paris a conqueror or a corpse. On the other side, De Melo unwisely refused to await the arrival of General Beck, who, with a detached wing of his army, was hastening back to his aid.

The night was cold and dim, but soon the whole plain blazed with watch-fires, which flung a ruddy blush on the lowering heavens, the sombre foliage and the white walls of the besieged town. As the night rolled on, the scene was one that, even in the mind of a war-worn veteran, might well have awakened feelings of solemn awe. The majestic woods ranged around in a sylvan amphitheatre, here frowning in dense masses, here standing out gaunt and spectral in the flickering light, looked down mournfully on that tranquil plain, so soon

to be rent by the fury and strewn with the wrecks of war, to become the grave of a great empire; but where now the death-like stillness resting on the armed hosts, and sadly suggestive of the deeper and more appalling silence that would close the strife of the morrow, was rendered palpable rather than broken by the mighty respiration of profound slumber, floating in a drowsy hum upon the air, or the occasional boom of a cannon from the distant ramparts, echoing in dying thunder through the leafy aisles of the forest. And in addition to the sobering influence which the mournful magic of that scene and hour would naturally fling over the unseared mind of a general of two and twenty on the eve of his first battle, there were special anxieties incidental to Enghien's situation sufficient to disturb the composure of the most veteran captain. He was about, with inferior forces, and, contrary to the advice of his oldest officers, to fight a battle on which the safety not only of his army but of his country depended. Opposed to him were generals grown grey in war, on ground selected by themselves; and above all he had to confront the renowned Spanish infantry, those famous tercios who, since the days of the Great Captain, had been the terror and admiration of the world. On their serried ranks the stormiest wave of battle had hitherto

broken in vain. No foeman had ever seen their backs. They had driven the Arabs from the mosques of Cordova; they had shivered the idols in the temples of the Incas; they had crushed the great Lutheran League at Muhlberg; they had tamed the pride of Islam on the banks of the Danube. Often before had the flower of French chivalry recoiled from their iron columns like raging surf from a rugged cliff. Whenever hitherto the battle had wavered, the shock of the tercios, united as one man, had turned the tide. For a century and a half they had been invincible, and in truth it needed extraordinary genius or extraordinary incapacity to outweigh so much disciplined valour.

But the mind of the young hero, naturally somewhat hard and selfish, was as undisturbed as if it had found in peril its proper element. Flinging himself on the ground by a watch-fire, he was soon buried in such profound slumber that his attendants aroused him with difficulty at break of day. Before the dawn of the 20th of May, 1643, both armies were drawn out in battle array. The formation of both was that usual at the time; the strength of the cavalry was disposed on the wings, the strength of the infantry in the centre.

On the right wing of the French, Enghien commanded in person, with Gassion as second in

command. In place of a helmet he wore a hat adorned with large white plumes. Marshal l'Hopital led the French left, Baron d'Espanan the centre, and Baron de Sirot the reserves. This last general was a Burgundian, famous throughout the army for his boast that in each of three pitched battles he had encountered a king, and had borne away as trophies of his personal prowess the hat of Gustavus Adolphus, the scarf of the King of Poland, and the pistol of the King of Denmark.

The right of the Spanish army, composed mainly of German horse, was led by Don Francisco de Melo. The Duke of Albuquerque, a distinguished officer, was stationed on the left with the Walloon Cavalry. The tercios were in the centre; their renowned leader, the Count of Fuentes, oppressed by age and infirmities, reclined on a litter in the midst of his veteran bands. De Melo, taking advantage of the hollow and wooded ground that separated the hostile camps, placed a thousand musketeers in ambush, with orders to fall on Enghien's flank and rear in the heat of the fight.

The trumpets having sounded, the battle began simultaneously on both wings. Enghien, having penetrated the tactics of his adversary, made a detour to the right, cut in pieces the musketeers

who lay sheltered in a copse-wood, and then dashing forward with the rapidity of a whirlwind, charged the Spanish left in front and flank. Albuquerque's Walloons were borne down by the impetuosity of the attack, and scattered over the plain like withered leaves drifting in the blasts of autumn. On the other wing, De Melo, with equal vigour and success, drove l'Hopital's squadrons from the field; routed Espanan's infantry; captured all the French artillery; and then fell with fury on the reserves. The situation appeared so desperate that several of his officers urged Baron Sirot to fly, assuring him that the day was lost. "No," replied the Burgundian, "the day is not lost, for Sirot and his comrades have yet to fight." But notwithstanding the most heroic efforts, the French reserves, pressed on all sides, began to waver, and disastrous rout seemed inevitable along the whole line.

Tidings of the critical state of the battle were brought to Enghien, while he was still in hot pursuit of Albuquerque's cavalry. It was a moment to test decisively the capacity of a leader. But Enghien, like Julius Cæsar, was born a great general. One flash of inspiration showed him the road to victory, one mighty impulse of impetuous valour carried him to the goal. Gathering together his squadrons, he led them at full gallop

behind the Spanish centre, and hurled them like a thunderbolt against De Melo's rear. The shock and the surprise of an assault from warriors who appeared to have started out of the earth, were irresistible. Rider and horse went down in the crash of this terrible onset. The French cavalry cleft like an iron wedge through the midst of the enemy; then, wheeling right and left, rode them down in masses. The plain was strewn with the broken ranks. De Melo's whole wing was shattered to pieces, and the General, casting away his baton of command, saved himself with difficulty by the speed of his horse.

But the battle was not yet over. It still remained to vanquish the Spanish infantry which, drawn up in a solid square, had hitherto stood motionless, haughty and menacing, but calm in the heroic pride of a hundred triumphs, a dark cloud charged with the lightning of war. Enghien surveyed these stern warriors for some time with admiration mingled with anxiety; but while he hesitated to attack them, information reached him of the approach of General Beck's division. It was clear that he had no more time to lose. Having first ordered a furious cannonade with all his guns, to break in pieces the serried lines of the enemy, he collected his cavalry into one mass and threw it on the Spanish square. The Spaniards remained

motionless till their assailants had come to within fifty feet; then their ranks opening, vomited forth a hissing torrent of flame and death that swept away the French by entire squadrons. So terrible was the carnage and confusion in the French ranks, that a charge of the German or Walloon horse must have totally changed the fortunes of the day. But these were already far away from the field, and Enghien rallied his men with extraordinary promptitude. Again and yet again the French artillery thundered, and in the pauses of the cannonade, the French cavalry charged with the most brilliant courage into the gaps which the shot had torn, roused to the highest pitch of enthusiasm by the example of their young leader, who rode in the foremost line, his white plumes floating above the thickest of the fight, a foam-streak cresting the red wave of battle. Again and a third time the choicest troops of France were scattered in frightful disarray, or fell in heaps, mowed down by the iron tempest that burst from that fatal square. It was then that the Count of Fuentes showed with what grandeur a noble spirit can rise superior to the infirmities of the body, and the pangs of death itself. Broken by years and sickness, and covered with wounds, the old General continued, with serene fortitude, to issue his orders from the litter that was soaked with his

blood, and to sustain his old companions in arms by voice and example. The brave tercios, girdled by their rampart of fire, sternly closed up their thinning ranks after each furious onset, and again awaited, with unfaltering resolution, the shock of the foe.

At last Enghien bringing up all his forces, horse, foot, and artillery, assailed the Spaniards on every side. But the Spanish officers now saw that further resistance could only result in useless slaughter. Their best men had fallen; Fuentes was expiring of his wounds; and there was no longer a hope of succour. The fugitive cavalry, meeting in its flight the advancing troops of General Beck, had communicated to them its own panic, and hurried them along in such headlong rout, that all the cannon and baggage of the division was abandoned to an unseen enemy. The Spanish officers, therefore, expressed by signs a wish to surrender. Enghien, overjoyed, advanced alone to accept their submission. But the Spanish soldiers, mistaking his friendly gestures for hostile signals, received him with a terrible volley of musketry. He escaped by a miracle. The French, enraged at this seeming perfidy, rushed forward to avenge it, and numbers fell before the exertions of the officers on both sides could stay the slaughter. The surviving Spaniards surrendered.

Such was the victory of Rocroi, one of the most glorious and decisive in history. It was the death-blow of the great Spanish monarchy. The renowned tercios, so long its prop and pride, were here annihilated. A Spanish officer, on being asked after the battle what had been their strength in the morning, answered with a mournful pride, "You have only to count the dead and the prisoners." Spain henceforth was unable to maintain the leading position which for more than a century she had held. From the battle of Rocroi dates that decided military superiority of the French which has more than once menaced the independence of Europe.

## CHAPTER II.

AFTER this great victory, Enghien proposed to over-run Flanders, which lay open to invasion. But the boldness of the project was distasteful to the Council of State, then distracted by the dissensions that preceded the elevation of Cardinal Mazarin to the supreme conduct of affairs; and he was compelled to restrict his operations to the siege of Thionville, one of the strongest fortresses in Europe, which commanded the course of the Moselle to the gates of Treves. The fall of this important town, after a stubborn defence, terminated the campaign. Anne of Austria, overjoyed at splendid successes which had established her Regency with so much *éclat*, heaped favours on the young conqueror. She gave him the government of Champagne and the town of Stenay; and at his request, Gassion, his able though somewhat impracticable lieutenant, received a Marshal's baton.

The extraordinary career of Gassion, one of the greatest soldiers France has produced, deserves a brief notice. Alone of the celebrated generals who created the military power of Louis XIV., he owed nothing of his success to birth or family interest. Valour and capacity raised him when still young, in spite of unusual personal and political disadvantages, from the grade of a private soldier to that of Marshal of France. He was the son of a President of the Parliament of Pau. His father destined him for the legal profession, but at the age of fifteen he ran away from home and enlisted. His bravery and good conduct soon won commendation; but the rude independence of his character, and his strong attachment to the Huguenot faith, coupled with his plebeian origin, opposed an almost insuperable bar to his advancement. Fortunately for him he attracted the notice of Cardinal Richelieu, whose eye was ever quick to discern merit, and who was indulgent to heretical opinions when they did not menace the welfare of the State. The Cardinal, admiring the military talents and the rough frankness of the young Gascon, gave him his confidence and esteem, pushed him on to high commands, and was fond of comparing him to his celebrated countryman, Bertrand de Guesclin. He used to add that Gassion was free from the coarseness that sullied

the splendid qualities of Charles V.'s famous Constable. Though Gassion obtained his Marshal's baton upon the recommendation of Enghien, his insubordination afterwards provoked a quarrel with his imperious commander. Incapable of flattery or even of discretion, he gave mortal offence to Cardinal Mazarin by publicly deriding the all-powerful minister's pretensions to military knowledge; and there is but little doubt that long before his death he would have fallen into complete disgrace, had his genius been less remarkable, or less necessary to the State. He was killed in 1647, while besieging the small town of Lens, and, as has been well remarked by a native historian, "France in gaining a hamlet lost a hero."

During Enghien's absence at the siege of Thionville, his young wife was delivered of a son. He, who only the previous year might have been seen playing at children's games in the saloons of the capital, returned to them with the most glorious name in Europe, and found all Paris at his feet.

There has never existed in any other country of Europe a condition of society approaching in intellectual brilliancy and extravagant debauchery, that of the French capital during the Regency of Anne of Austria. Never before or since has there been seen collected together such versatile genius, such sparkling wit, such spiritual beauty adorned

with every charm except virtue, such coarse frivolity, such reckless ferocity, such universal and shameless laxity of principle. The melancholy and austere character of Louis XIII.; his long estrangement from his wife, which banished gaiety and pomp from the silent halls of the Louvre, and the iron rule of his Minister had exercised a stifling influence on French society. Richelieu himself was a most munificent friend of literature and the fine arts, and delighted in brilliant festivals and pageants. He loved to assemble all who were distinguished or attractive in the magnificent halls of the Palais Cardinal, or at Ruel, where every form of costly and refined enjoyment charmed the fancy and gratified the most fastidious taste. But ever engrossed with the cares of government and the active direction of military operations, his occasional example was insufficient to counteract the effects of a state of continual foreign and domestic strife, a harsh and cheerless court, and a sternly repressive rule. The young, beautiful, and accomplished Marchioness of Rambouillet had indeed already formed the celebrated circle which for purity of tone, combined with the highest charms of cultivated intellect, and feminine grace, has never been rivalled. In the saloons of the Hotel Rambouillet might be seen, amidst a dazzling crowd of minor luminaries,

Voiture; Corneille, now at the summit of his fame; Moliere, La Fontaine, Boileau, who had already achieved their first laurels; Bossuet rising into celebrity, and, later on, Pascal. But the standard of thought and refinement in this circle was too high for any but the choicer spirits of the time, and its influence did not touch the general mass of the high-born and wealthy.

At the commencement of the Regency, however, Parisian society, relieved from the frigid asceticism of Louis XIII., and the iron pressure of Richelieu, burst forth with a wayward vigour and a wild licentiousness, which went on increasing in force and extravagance till they culminated in the frantic excesses of the Fronde. The Court presented an appearance of festivity and splendour unknown since the palmy days of Catherine of Medicis. Brilliant, beautiful, and dissolute women, the Duchess of Chevreuse, the Duchess of Montbazon, the Princess Palatine, and others belonging to the highest rank of nobility, who had been forced into exile or obscurity in the previous reign, reappeared in Paris, and threw open their saloons, in which the strife of love, of politics, of vanity, of cupidity, raged without restraint. It was an age of extraordinary characters. The most celebrated personages of either sex who illustrated the times of Louis XIV. grew up, or were matured,

amidst the bold license in which the social and political life of France rioted during the regency of his mother. The young hero of Rocroi found himself, on his return to the capital, the central figure of intoxicating scenes, which flattered his self-esteem and stimulated his passions. Loaded with honours and caresses by the Regent and Cardinal Mazarin, idolized by his own family, courted and followed on every side by those who were themselves objects of adulation, disliking and despising his wife, he plunged into the dissipations which spread their allurements before him, with all the ardour of his fiery nature. The queens of beauty and fashion welcomed the young hero with their brightest smiles; and there gathered around him, as their natural chief, a brilliant band of debauched young nobles, many of whom afterwards became famous. De Grammont, Bussy, Rabutin, Marsillac, better known as La Rochefoucault, Chatillon, and his brother Coligny. Boutteville, renowned in later years as Duke of Luxembourg, Turenne, were constantly seen in his train. His person and bearing were well adapted to sustain the admiration excited by his great achievements. He was above the middle stature, was perfectly well-made, and excelled in all graceful and manly exercises. He had a magnificent head. Large blue eyes, bright and piercing

as those of an eagle, and an aquiline nose lent to his countenance a singular character of command. His mouth, which was too large, and expressed the harshness and want of sensibility which disfigured his disposition, detracted from the haughty beauty of his face; but the vivacity of his glance and the sparkling gaiety of his conversation, soon caused its disagreeable effect to be forgotten. There was something great and lofty in his whole appearance and demeanour, which discovered, even to a stranger, a proud and indomitable soul.

The family of Condé consisted of the old Prince and Princess; Enghien with his wife and son; a daughter, Anne Genevieve of Bourbon, two years older than the Duke; and a second son, his junior by eight years.

Mademoiselle de Bourbon, one of the loveliest women of the age, was married to the Duke of Longueville, a nobleman old enough to be her father, but of great hereditary possessions and influence, who represented an illegitimate branch of the royal line, and one of the most worthy of the national heroes, the famous Count Dunois. Her beauty consisted not so much in perfection of feature, as in that combination of colouring and expression, of tender grace and soft brilliancy, which is most potent over the hearts of men. It

was impossible, according to the confession of a lady who was her contemporary and not her friend, to see her without loving and wishing to please her. The mild radiance of her blue eyes, rich and lustrous as a turquoise, the dazzling bloom of a complexion in which the lily and the rose were exquisitely blended; the masses of golden hair that crowned her loveliness, as with a glory, the delicate symmetry of her form, and an undulating grace which made its movements the poetry of motion, ravished the eyes of the beholder, like an angelic vision. Her personal attractions were enhanced by wit, talent, and considerable accomplishments. Her brothers were attached to her with passionate devotion, and the most distinguished young nobles of the Court ardently contended for her favour. But her conduct had been above reproach, until a tragical incident which occurred at this time changed the whole tenour of her life.

During the summer of 1643 the struggle for power between Anne of Austria's old allies, the party of the ancient noblesse, under the leadership of Madame de Chevreuse and the young Duke of Beaufort, grandson of Henry IV., and the party of Cardinal Richelieu, of which the Prince of Condé and Cardinal Mazarin were chiefs, convulsed the Court and city. The Princess of

Condé and Richelieu's accomplished niece, the Duchess of Aiguillon, gave efficient support to the cause to which family interest linked them; but the vast majority of the great ladies of the capital were vehement partizans of the feudal party, popularly known as the "Importants." Conspicuous amongst these ladies for bold and dazzling beauty, and for resolute audacity which scorned the restraints of prudence, was the young Duchess of Montbazon, wife of the aged Governor of Paris, who was father of Madame de Chevreuse, by an earlier marriage. Magnificent dark hair and eyes, a brilliant complexion heightened by art, and a majestic figure, commanded for Madame de Montbazon the admiration and homage of the whole Court. Beaufort was a passionate and favoured lover of hers; and even the Duke of Longueville wore her chains. The fresher charms, the more exalted rank, the spotless fame of Madame de Longueville, her reputation in the fastidious circle of the Hotel Rambouillet, and her quiet contempt for attractions which borrowed so largely from art, excited Madame de Montbazon's jealousy and anger. Not content with enticing to her feet the husband of her rival, she resolved to blast her name. One evening two letters were picked up in the crowded saloons of the Hotel de Montbazon, and carried to the hostess.

No one approaching to claim them, the Duchess glanced over their contents, and proposed to read them aloud for the amusement of her guests. They were anonymous epistles from a lady to her lover, reproaching him for his coldness, and his ingratitude for past favours. The Duchess having finished the reading, amidst laughter, coarse jests, and satirical conjectures regarding the writer, declared that the letters were in the handwriting of Madame de Longueville, and that they had been dropped by Count Coligny, who had just quitted the apartment. This statement, though a mere calumny, as was made manifest shortly afterwards by the voluntary confession of one of the real lovers, was quickly circulated in whispered confidences by frail sisters, and with rude jibes and merriment by the Duke of Beaufort and his boisterous companions. In the heated state of the political atmosphere, the springing of a mine beneath the city could not have filled it with greater tumult and dismay than did the broaching of this slander. The House of Condé and its powerful connexion prepared to right the injured lady, if necessary, by the force of arms. Enghien, then before Thionville, despatched a challenge to Beaufort, and, without waiting for the Regent's permission, set out for Paris to avenge his sister. The allies of the

Houses of Vendome, Guise and Montbazon, in short the whole party of the Importants, rallied around the vindictive Duchess. The capital would have been deluged with blood had not the Regent promptly intervened and treated the quarrel as an affair of State. She sent a messenger to stop Enghien, with the assurance that she assumed to herself the duty of vindicating the honour of a Bourbon princess; and then commanded Madame de Montbazon to deliver up the letters to her, and to make a public apology to the Princess of Condé. The Duchess was forced to submit. The letters were read aloud at Court by Cardinal Mazarin, and then committed by Anne of Austria to the flames. Madame de Chevreuse, on behalf of her step-daughter, and Mazarin on the part of the Queen, met in a room of the Louvre, and, after a wrangling discussion of many hours, agreed on the terms in which reparation was to be made. On the appointed day Madame de Montbazon, attended by Beaufort and a splendid train of cavaliers, repaired to the Hotel de Condé, where all the world of Paris was assembled. The written apology, which she was to read aloud, was pinned, as previously agreed, to the inside of her fan. The princess, the living type of calm dignity and aristocratic pride, and still adorned with much of the peerless beauty which had thrown

half Europe into confusion, awaited her unwilling visitor in State at the furthest end of the crowded saloon, with Cardinal Mazarin at her side as representative of the Regent. The Duchess slowly advanced towards them with an air of insolent levity; pronounced the words in mocking tones; and then, surrounded by her brilliant escort, swept in superb disdain from the room. The deliberate insult of this proceeding aggravated the original offence; and the Princess obtained permission from the Queen to absent herself from every place of resort where she might be forced to endure the presence of her fair enemy. As Madame de Condé, by her rank, lofty character, political influence, and close intimacy with Anne of Austria, was in reality, though not in name, the second lady in France, this arrangement excluded the Duchess of Montbazon from society on all occasions of Court festivity or State ceremonial. Deeply mortified she determined to resist.

The most fashionable place of public resort at that time in Paris was a pleasure garden, called the "Jardin Renard," close to the Seine, at the bottom of the Tuileries Gardens. It was the custom of the high world to repair thither on summer evenings after the promenade on Cours la Reine, and solace themselves with feasting, music, and flirtations. The Duchess of Chevreuse

one evening invited the Queen and the Princess of Condé to sup with her in this garden. As they approached the pavilion reserved for them Madame de Montbazon came forth from it to receive them. The princess was about to retire, but the Queen requested Madame de Chevreuse to induce her step-daughter to withdraw. But this self-willed lady flatly refused, and persisted in accosting Anne of Austria, who waved her off with an angry gesture, and quitted the Garden. The Regent dearly loved dainty cheer; and her wrath was not diminished on hearing how the Duchess, after her departure, had seated herself, in high spirits, and feasted on the delicacies provided for the royal party. On the following day the rebellious beauty received an order of banishment from Paris, and her exile was speedily followed by the ruin of her faction. When Enghien returned to Court, Beaufort was a prisoner at Vincennes; but, at his instigation, Count Coligni challenged the Duke of Guise, who was accused, though apparently with injustice, of having been concerned in disseminating the slander about Madame de Longueville. Notwithstanding the severe laws against duelling, enacted by Cardinal Richelieu, the combatants met at three o'clock in the afternoon in the centre of the Place Royale, then the most fashionable

quarter of Paris. After a few passes, Coligni fell, mortally wounded. At a window over-looking the scene might be discerned a half-concealed form of exquisite grace, agitated by powerful emotion; a face of almost seraphic beauty clouded over by anxiety, and terror, and despair. It was Madame de Longueville watching the encounter, and the mortal agony of her champion, the ill-starred victim of the baffled vengeance of her family, and his own fatal passion. The unhappy notoriety which attached to her on account of these events had a most disastrous influence on Madame de Longueville's subsequent career.

With politics, Enghien meddled little during the lifetime of his father. It was a field for which his natural disposition did not fit him. He had neither the patience, nor the tact, nor the steadiness of purpose required for political success. Brought up in great awe of his father, who had grown grey in intrigue, he submissively bowed to the old Prince's experience in matters of State policy; and Condé lost none of his opportunities, as President of the Council of State and chief prop of Cardinal Mazarin, for advancing the interests of his house. The Princess was the bosom friend of Anne of Austria. Wholly devoted to her glorious son, she strove to forward even his unreasonable aims and caprices with un-

tiring ardour. War and pleasure—the perils and hardships of a bloody and brilliant campaign, followed by the soft and turbulent delights of Parisian society, chiefly filled up the four years of his life that followed his first memorable achievement in arms.

In the spring of 1644, France had armies on foot against the Spaniards, in Italy, on the Flemish frontier, and in Catalonia, which had revolted from the Spanish crown; and in Germany against the Emperor and the Elector of Bavaria. The army of Flanders would naturally have fallen to Enghien had not the Duke of Orleans, the King's uncle, and Lieutenant-General of the Kingdom, jealous of the renown of his young cousin, suddenly claimed the command. Enghien, therefore, to his intense mortification, found himself condemned to inaction at the head of a few thousand men on the borders of Luxembourg, until the disasters of the French arms in Germany called him to a sphere more worthy of his genius.

In November of the preceding year the Bavarians and Imperialists, under their famous generals, Count Mercy and John of Werth, had, though inferior in strength, fallen on the army of Marshal Rantzau, at Teutlingen, put it to complete rout, captured its commander and his chief officers while they were at dinner, and all its artillery and

baggage. The French Court dispatched Viscount Turenne to repair this great misfortune. Turenne, the younger brother of the Duke of Bouillon, was ten years older than Enghien, and had greatly distinguished himself in Italy. Notwithstanding all his efforts, he was only able to collect, in the spring of 1644, about ten thousand of Rantzau's men, demoralised by defeat, wretchedly equipped, and in want of all necessary stores. Mercy, with fifteen thousand men, laid siege to Fribourg, in the Briesgau, and the French General, unable to offer any effectual opposition, appealed to Cardinal Mazarin for reinforcements. Thereupon Enghien was ordered to march into Germany with ten thousand fresh troops, and assume the chief command.

When the young Duke joined Turenne, he found that Fribourg had surrendered, and that Mercy had intrenched himself in an apparently impregnable position before the town. The campaigns that followed between Enghien and Mercy have especial interest, because never probably before or since have the merits of the French and German soldiers been so fairly tested. The armies, though small, were of the best quality, and not unequal in numbers. The Germans were all veterans, trained in the Thirty Years' War. In the opposite camp was the flower of the French

nobility, which for splendid military qualities has never in any age or country been surpassed. The commanders were, in the highest military sense, representative men. Mercy belonged to the greatest school of German generals, and was himself unrivalled in the thoughtful skill which used to the utmost advantage the stubborn valour of his troops. Enghien excelled all French generals in rapid insight, in heroic daring, and in the faculty of kindling and keeping alive in his men the "French fury" to which the martial renown of his nation is so largely due. And, if his rash genius was to some extent sustained by the calm science of Turenne; on the other hand, the caution of Mercy was stimulated and rendered fruitful by the brilliant audacity of John of Werth.

The German army occupied a small plain on the summit of a mountain, three sides of which were thickly wooded, and surrounded by still loftier eminences shaggy with dense forests. The fourth side had a gentler slope, which was clothed with vineyards, and broken by low walls and *abattis* of felled wood; these, as well as the fortifications that crowned its crest, were held in force by Mercy's troops. On the left of the position, a deep and narrow defile wound through the wooded heights. The mouth of this ravine was strongly

barricaded, and its steep sides afforded cover to bodies of picked marksmen. The rear of the German camp rested on the town of Fribourg. Turenne, judging this entrenched post to be impregnable, urged Enghien to turn it and compel the Germans to evacuate it by cutting off their supplies. But the young Duke, listening only to the suggestions of his courage, resolved, in order to retrieve the honour of the French arms, to carry it by storm. He directed Turenne, with part of the army, to force the defile and take the enemy in flank; while he, with the remainder, assailed him in front.

In order to allow time for Turenne to execute his circuitous movement, the attack was deferred until about five o'clock in the afternoon of the 3rd of August. The main body of the French climbed the mountain, through the vineyards, under a terrible fire; carried obstacle after obstacle with the greatest heroism; and reached the entrenchment on the summit. But here, worn out by the previous struggles, and disheartened by the formidable appearance of the works before them, they wavered and fell back. Enghien galloped to the front, threw himself from his horse, put himself at the head of the regiment of Conti, and flinging his baton of command into the midst of the Bavarian camp, led his men to the assault.

Inspired with resistless ardour, by the example of their general, they carried the redoubt, after frightful carnage; and when the night closed in, were masters of the enemy's last line of defence. In the meantime Turenne had been slowly winning his way against almost insuperable obstructions. Just as decisive results were about to reward his efforts, darkness, ushered in by torrents of rain and a furious storm, compelled him to pause. The French generals, uncertain of the extent of each other's progress, impatiently awaited the morning light to renew the conflict. But when day broke they discovered that their skilful antagonist, under cover of the tempestuous night, had quietly withdrawn his army to a still stronger position on the Black Mountain behind the town.

The following day, the 4th of August, was spent by the French in recovering from their fatigues, and by the Germans in completing their defences. On the 5th, as Enghien was engaged with Turenne in making dispositions for a second attack, another of his officers, Baron Espenan, disconcerted all his plans by commencing the action without orders. The fight was maintained the whole day with extraordinary obstinacy, but in the end the French were repulsed on all sides with prodigious slaughter. The heaps of dead

and dying that covered the field, recklessly sacrificed in ill-judged assaults, filled the humane heart of Turenne with grief. But Enghien, with the selfish levity and the contempt for human suffering which have left the darkest blot upon his fame, jestingly remarked that "one night of Paris would repair the loss." His force, however, was so much weakened that, after watching the German position for three days, he prepared to follow the original advice of Turenne, and by making a detour, cut off his antagonist from Wurtemberg. But Mercy penetrated his designs; and fearing to be starved among the mountains, sacrificed his artillery and baggage, and withdrew his army with little loss through the passes of the Black Forest.

Though the glory of this series of desperate battles, known as the three days of Fribourg, was equally shared by the hostile generals and armies, all the solid advantages fell to the French. Within a few weeks after, Phillipsburg, Worms, Oppenheim, Mayence, Landau, Manheim and other important places surrendered to Enghien or Turenne; and then the Duke returned to the dissipations of Paris, leaving the chief command in Germany with his able lieutenant.

Enghien's sojourn in the capital during the winter of 1644-5 was marked by a violent attach-

ment he conceived for Mademoiselle Vigean, a young lady distinguished by good sense and mental accomplishments rather than by beauty. Her virtue being proof against his solicitations, he formed the extravagant project of repudiating his wife and elevating the new object of his passion to the vacant dignity. The scheme was betrayed by Madame de Longueville to the Prince of Condé, who, greatly enraged, used effectual means to nip it in the bud. So violent, however, was Enghien's passion that when compelled to part from Mdle. Vigean by the renewal of hostilities in the spring of 1645, he is said to have swooned away from grief.

The year 1645 opened with signal disgrace for the French arms in Germany. Turenne, after Enghien's departure, had obtained several important advantages; but while in winter quarters at Mariendal, he suffered himself to be surprised by Count Mercy and John of Werth, who destroyed or captured nearly his entire army, and all its baggage, guns, and military chest. Never was there seen more complete discomfiture. Turenne, without losing heart, applied himself, with the patient energy and the fertility of resource in which he excelled all other generals of his time, to repair this great disaster; but before he could collect the means of striking a

blow the French Government again sent Enghien to supersede him in the command. The Duke brought with him a reinforcement of eight thousand men, and used every artifice to draw the enemy into a decisive battle. But the great Bavarian General, having selected a position on the plains of Nordlingen, with the tactical judgment in which he had no superior, and carefully fortified it, would only fight on his own ground.

Two hills arise, at a short distance from each other, out of the plain; one, rather precipitous, was called the Weinberg; the other had a gentler slope, and was crowned by the old Castle of Allerheim. At the entrance of the narrow valley that divided them, nestled the village of Allerheim. Mercy had drawn up his infantry in three lines across the mouth of the valley, and protected them with strong entrenchments. His right wing, under General Glen, held the Weinberg. The Imperialist cavalry, under John of Werth, was massed on his left around the Castle of Allerheim. Extensive works covered every assailable point of the position, which, formidable by nature and art, and defended by fifteen thousand excellent troops, seemed to defy attack. Enghien had only eighteen thousand men. His infantry were inferior both in numbers and quality to that

of his opponent, and Turenne strove earnestly to dissuade him from hazarding an engagement on such unequal terms. But confident in his genius and fortune, and having no hope of enticing Mercy to less disadvantageous ground, the Duke drew up his army for battle. He directed Turenne with the left wing to carry the Weinberg, while Marshal Grammont with the right wing opposed John of Werth, and the Count of Marsin, with the centre, assailed the village of Allerheim. A strong force of horse and foot was stationed in the rear, under the Count of Chabot, as a reserve.

The French infantry under Marsin attacked the village, which was the key of the German position, with great fury, and succeeded in penetrating into the main street. But from the houses on either side, from the church steeple, and from the loop-holed walls of the cemetery, the Bavarian musketeers poured on them a murderous fire. Marsin fell badly wounded. His division, maintaining the struggle to the last with unavailing gallantry, was almost annihilated; and fresh regiments sent to its support under the Marquis of la Moussaye shared the same fate. Then Enghien led up the remainder of his infantry, in person, to restore the battle. Mercy, who till now had been calmly watching the progress of the fight, could not

restrain his joy on seeing Enghien's movement. "God," he cried, "has turned the heads of the Frenchmen; they are rushing to defeat;" and putting himself at the head of his reserves he advanced to repel this new assault. The combat now raged with ten-fold fury; the carnage was horrible. The rival generals, carried away by emulation, fought in the *mêlée* within a hundred yards of one another. Enghien had two horses killed under him, and three wounded; his hat and clothes were riddled with bullets, and he was slightly wounded in the thigh and arm. He did all that the energy and valour of one man could accomplish; but he had attempted impossibilities. The wrecks of his infantry, swept back from the village by the Bavarian onset, broke and fled in wild confusion. Mercy was killed in the moment of victory, cheering on his troops; but the French centre was utterly destroyed.

Meanwhile the fate of the day in other parts of the field had been hardly less adverse to Enghien. John of Werth, charging down from the Castle of Allerheim, routed the right wing of the French, and took Marshal Grammont prisoner. He then fell on the reserve, defeated and dispersed it, killed its commander, Chabot, and, hurried away by the ardour of pursuit, chased the fugitives for miles over the plain. On the left wing, Turenne

had partly scaled the Weinberg, but was held in check by General Glen. Nothing could be more unpromising than the prospect that presented itself at this moment to Enghien. The right centre and reserve of his army were gone; and the left, clinging with difficulty to the side of a steep hill, was in momentary danger of being hurled back by superior numbers, or taken in the rear. Even an able general, in such circumstances, might well have limited his plans to the saving from destruction of the still unbroken remnant of his forces.

But far different was the conception that occurred to the daring genius of the Duke. There was still left to him a small body of Hessian infantry, and a handful of cavalry. Putting himself at the head of these, he charged up the Weinberg and threw himself on Glen's men, already fully occupied by the attack of Turenne. The Germans, shaken by the impetuosity of this sudden onslaught, gave ground. Enghien pressed on, resistless; flung them down into the valley in headlong flight, and, following on their track, dispersed them completely, and took their general prisoner. He then surrounded the village of Allerheim. The victorious Bavarian infantry, deprived of their leader, and bewildered by the sudden turn of the battle, surrendered without a

blow. When, a few moments later, John of Werth returned, in all the confidence of assured success, to complete the destruction of his foes, he found the battle irretrievably lost. Never was there seen such a triumph of happy fortune and inspired audacity. Had Mercy lived, had John of Werth returned by a shorter route, had the Bavarians defended Allerheim, nothing could have saved the French from a terrible defeat. And no other general but Enghien could have plucked victory from such complete discomfiture. Napoleon, in his military criticisms, while censuring severely the temerity of the French commander in attacking such a position with forces so inadequate, has expressed the warmest admiration of his conduct in the fight. It was in reference to Enghien's heroic pertinacity, in persevering with his left wing at Nordlingen, after the rest of his army had been swept away, that the great Emperor used the following memorable words:—"The glory and honour of his country's arms ought to be the first and highest consideration with a general who engages in battle. The safety and preservation of the army is only the second. But it is also in that same audacity and obstinacy, which the honour and glory of his country's arms demand, that the safety and preservation of the army is found. In a retreat, besides the honour

of his country's arms, he will often lose more than in two battles—a reason *never* to despair while brave men remain around the standards. By this, victory is obtained ; by this, it is merited."

So great was the slaughter of the French at Nordlingen that for several days Enghien could not collect fifteen hundred infantry. Count Mercy was buried on the field of battle. The inscription on his tomb was not unworthy of the warrior—" *Sta Viator : heroem calcas.*"

This was also the last battle of John of Werth, who retired from it unmolested with his victorious horsemen. He was the most brilliant and enterprising of all the great German soldiers of his time. As a leader of cavalry, he had no equal. Like Gassion, he owed nothing to birth or fortune ; his great qualities alone had raised him from the ranks of the Imperialist army to the highest command. He was especially famous for the daring and success with which he effected surprises. The secrecy and skill of his plans were only matched by the force and rapidity of his blows. More than one hostile general's reputation was shattered ; more than one hostile army was aroused from false security to utter destruction by the irresistible onset of John of Werth, falling like a thunderbolt out of a clear sky. And his splendid talents were enhanced by a purity of

character and a lofty disinterestedness which shone brighter from being placed in contrast with the spirit of rapine and the lawless brutality so conspicuous in most of the renowned commanders of his age and country.

When he had sufficiently rested and reorganised his shattered forces, Enghien laid siege to Heilbronn ; but the fatigues and excitement he had undergone induced a brain-fever which brought him to the brink of the grave. He was carried in a litter to Phillipsburg, and profusely bled, under which treatment he recovered slowly, and was unable to take any further part in the campaign. Illness and loss of blood had the effect of extinguishing his passion for Mlle. Vigean. The burning ardour of his addresses to her during the previous winter sank, on his return to Paris, at once, without any premonitory gradations, to repelling coldness ; and in her grief and chagrin at this unlooked-for fickleness, she retired into a convent and took the veil.

All parties in Germany were now thoroughly exhausted by the fierce warfare which had desolated the land for more than a quarter of a century ; and the negotiations for a general peace, which had been prosecuted fitfully at Munster since 1643, were renewed in a more earnest spirit. Hostilities languished during the year 1646, but

were not interrupted. Turenne, at the head of the French army, pursued a successful career, but the campaign was not marked by any great battle.

In Flanders the Duke of Orleans, elated by the capture of Corutras in the preceding campaign, again claimed the command, and Enghien, impatient of inaction, volunteered to serve under his incapable cousin. His bold schemes of conquest were unpalatable to the timid mind of the Lieut.-General, and the army sat down before Mardyke. The young Duke was the soul of the operations, pressing the siege with extraordinary vigour, and courting danger at every opportunity with his usual recklessness. On one occasion, having passed the whole night in the trenches, he was refreshing himself in his tent with a party of friends, when an alarm was given that the garrison had made a sally, slaughtered the French gunners, and destroyed the works. Enghien, without waiting to put on his armour, rushed forth, followed by his companions, and attacked the enemy sword in hand. He must inevitably have been killed or taken had not Bussy Rabutin galloped up to his assistance with his company of light horse. Bussy found him laying about him with fury, and covered with the blood of his foes. The Spaniards were ultimately driven back into

the town, but not until they had made prodigious havoc amongst the young French nobility.

The Spanish generals in the Netherlands, having at length drawn together their forces, advanced with confidence to raise the siege, despising the incapacity and irresolution of the Duke of Orleans. But hardly had the hostile army appeared before the French lines when it vanished, unaccountably, in the night. Enghien next morning followed in pursuit, and having with his own hand captured a young Spanish officer, demanded of him the cause of this sudden retreat. The Spaniard, wholly unsuspecting of the rank of his captor, answered simply that the Spanish commanders had heard that the Duke of Enghien was in the French camp. Mardyke, being thus abandoned to its fate, surrendered; and Orleans, satiated with victory, returned to flaunt his laurels before the admiring eyes of the good citizens of Paris. So intoxicated was this vain prince with his achievement in this and the preceding campaigns—achievements chiefly attributable to the assistance of Marshal la Meilleraie and Enghien—that, quite unconscious of the ridicule provoked by such a comparison, he assumed the glorious surname which the admiration of antiquity had conferred on the son of Antigonus, and signed his letters Gaston Poliorcetes.

The capture of Dunkirk had long been an object of ardent desire to the French nation, but the difficulties of the enterprise had hitherto deterred any French general from attempting it. No sooner, however, was Enghien free to act for himself, than he marched against the place. Notwithstanding the apparently insuperable obstacles, natural and artificial, that impeded his operations, the efforts of two Spanish armies, each equal in strength to his own, and the gallant resistance of the garrison, by skill and patience he compelled the city to surrender. The news was received in Paris with joy and wonder. "I think," wrote Voiture to him, "if you undertook it you would catch the moon with your teeth." This important conquest brought the campaign of 1646 to a close.

The course of this year had wrought a momentous change in Enghien's position. During the summer his brother-in-law, the Duke of Brezé, whom Cardinal Richelieu had made High Admiral of France, was killed in a naval engagement off the coast of Tuscany. Enghien immediately claimed the post, and his pretensions were supported by the whole influence of his family. But weighty considerations, public and private, determined the Government to refuse his demand. The House of Condé already engrossed a dangerous

share of authority in the kingdom. The old prince, besides his governments of Burgundy and Berri, held the offices of President of the Council and Grand Master, together with various minor appointments conferring emolument and power. The Duke, his son, was Governor of Champagne, possessed the strong frontier town of Stenay, and was the idol of the army. To confer on a young warrior, whose ardent genius would even now scarcely brook the slightest control, and who was so near the throne, the supreme command of all the sea forces of the country, would be a fatal blunder on the part of the Regent. Moreover, Cardinal Mazarin meant to use the great office now vacant, at once to fortify his political position, and to promote his schemes of family ambition. He contemplated a close alliance with the House of Vendôme, which stood at the head of the party of the great nobles with which he was at variance. A matrimonial union between the young Duke of Mercœur, heir of Vendôme, and one of his nieces, was the object of his secret aspirations; and the splendid dower of Admiral of France would bridge over the social chasm that separated the daughter of an obscure Italian gentleman from the grandson of Henry IV. In order to soften as much as possible her denial of Enghien's request, Anne of Austria announced her intention of as-

suming to herself the vacant post, under the title of Superintendent of the Seas. But the resentment which the refusal called forth from the whole family of Condé was none the less violent. The Duke stormed and pressed his demand with intemperate urgency; and Condé, irritated out of his usual prudence, used menacing language, and withdrew in high anger to his Government of Burgundy. The Regent met this outburst with spirit; but Mazarin quailed, and by submissive entreaties induced Condé to return to Court in order to negotiate an arrangement. Three days after his arrival at Chantilly the old Prince died. Although not distinguished either for shining talents or for integrity of character, his death at this conjuncture was a public calamity. France could have better spared a far greater man. His clear and penetrating intellect, his long experience, his great sagacity, even the selfishness which rendered him cautious, the authority which his rank, wealth, and knowledge of the business of the State gave him, and above all the restraining influence which he alone exercised over his fiery and wayward son, would have been invaluable to the government in the stormy times that were fast approaching. Starting in life a dependent on the bounty of Henry IV., he left to his successor an income of one million livres—enormous in that

age. Anne of Austria had conferred on him the vast possessions of the House of Montmorenci, forfeited to the Crown at the execution of the last Duke in 1632. If the portrait we have of him from the pen of Madame de Motteville, as he figured at the Court of the Regent, ugly and uncleanly, with red eyes, matted beard and greasy hair, at all corresponds with his appearance in his youth, there is some excuse for the unconjugal bearing of the fair Charlotte of Montmorenci. Indeed, the Marchioness of Rambouillet used to say that the princess only passed two happy days with her husband—the day of her marriage, which raised her to a place in the royal family of France, and the day of his death, which restored to her liberty.

The Queen and Cardinal Mazarin, in order to remove all traces of dissatisfaction from the mind of the new Prince of Condé, and to bind him completely to their interests, hastened to anticipate and to surpass in lavish concessions his reasonable expectations of Court favour. He was made Captain-General of the Armies of France, and invested at once with all the offices and employments held by his father, with the single stipulation that he should discontinue his opposition to the arrangement which left unfilled the place of High Admiral. The Government of Champagne was given to his younger brother, the Prince of

Conti. Condé, at the age of twenty-five, was not only the most renowned personage, but the most powerful subject in Europe, with unbounded opportunities of achieving all greatness to which the legitimate ambition of a subject can aspire. But though at first evidently overcome by the unexpected generosity of the Regent, he did not long remain satisfied. Extravagant projects of personal ambition began to fill his mind. Continually followed by the flower of the young French nobility, who imitating on all occasions the haughty bearing and imperious manners of their chief, obtained the nickname of *Petits Maitres*, now used to express very different qualities; seeing his boldest enterprises crowned by fortune, and his will a law to all around him, subjection even in its lightest and most splendid form was becoming irksome to him. He proposed to Mazarin to conquer *Franche Compté*, then a Spanish province, at his own charge, and retain it as an independent sovereignty. But the Cardinal, knowing well that the Prince would be a far more dangerous neighbour to Louis XIV. than the King of Spain, evaded compliance. This refusal led to renewed bickerings, which went on increasing in bitterness till Condé was induced, in the spring of 1647, to take the command of the French army in Catalonia, where two generals of

distinction, Marshal la Mothe Houdincourt and the Count of Harcourt, had lately met with signal reverses.

Many of the leading incidents of the Prince's operations this year are recorded with inimitable felicity in the lively memoirs of Count Grammont, who with many other brilliant and dissolute *Petits Maitres*, accompanied their leader into Spain. When Condé arrived at Barcelona, the citizens, seeing a youth with long hair, simply attired in black, did not conceal their contempt. It became a general subject of complaint amongst them that the French Government had sent them a student and not a general. But when after a few days the Prince rode forth through the city magnificently dressed and followed by a splendid suite, they at once recognised the hero, and received him with the utmost enthusiasm. He found his army in a deplorable state of inefficiency, in want of food, ammunition, and the means of transport. Nevertheless, he marched without delay against the town of Lerida, which had lately repulsed the Count of Harcourt from its walls, with disgrace.

Lerida, the *Ilerda* of the Romans, looking on the country which was the scene of Julius Cæsar's celebrated campaign against the lieutenants of Pompeius, was not a place of great strength.

But the Spaniards have always, even in their most degenerate days, been formidable behind stone walls ; and the town had for its commander Don Gregorio Brito, an old Portuguese officer of somewhat whimsical character, but of rare merit. The French general, filled with presumption on account of so many victories, and despising the place and its old-fashioned governor, began the siege with an insolent display which would have ill become its triumphant close. He opened the trenches in person, at the head of his own regiment, to the music of twenty-four violins ; and afterwards passed the evening in revelry amidst the works. Brito made no sign until night had fallen ; then sallying forth under cover of a terrific fire from the cannon on the ramparts, he swept the trenches, destroyed the labours of the French engineers, and drove back the besiegers in confusion to their camp. The next morning he sent his crest-fallen antagonist a complimentary message, with a present of iced fruit, regretting his inability to return the serenade in consequence of his want of violins, but assuring the Prince that if the music he had provided the night before had proved agreeable, he would endeavour to keep it up so long as the French did him the honour to remain before Lerida. The eccentric Portuguese was a man of his word. He did not leave the besiegers

a moment's repose, and repulsed all their assaults with fearful slaughter. His vigorous sallies, the rocky nature of the soil, the want of proper engineering tools, and other necessary supplies, protracted the siege until the tardy approach of a Spanish army, and the scorching heat of summer, with its train of diseases, forced even Condé, almost beside himself with rage and chagrin, to resign all hope of success. When the relieving force of the Spaniards appeared, he drew off his troops, sadly reduced by sickness and the sword. His reverse, the first he had yet experienced, was bitterly mortifying to him, especially when he learned that the wits of Paris were diverting themselves at his expense. People had been so accustomed to consider him invincible, that his defeat was magnified far beyond its real importance, and his reputation suffered in proportion. He tried every expedient to bring the Spanish general to a battle, but the latter prudently kept his men in a strong position, protected by the guns of Lerida. Indeed, it is said that the King of Spain never wrote to him without adding as a postscript, "Above all things take good care never to engage in battle with that presumptuous youth." The campaign ended without any other military event worthy of note.

It was during the siege of Lerida that the famous,

or rather infamous, revel of La Valliere furnished a horrible picture of the reckless and ferocious gaiety of the young French nobles. The Chevalier of la Valliere, a Marechal de Camp of high lineage, being on duty, in the beginning of June, at the quarters of Marshal Grammont, invited the celebrated Bussy Rabutin, and three other young officers, named Brabantane, Breteche and Jumeaux, to dine with him at the mouth of the trenches. Seeking relief from the tedium of camp life, the guests assembled some hours before the appointed time. Breakfast was served to them, and the Prince's band enlivened the repast with military music. The part of the trenches where they were, pierced through the walls of an old churchyard. Brabantane and Breteche, moved by a diabolical spirit of pleasantry, entered through the breach, tore off the stone cover of one of the tombs, and dragging forth a recently buried corpse, wrapped in its grave-clothes, made it dance to the sound of the violins. After amusing themselves in this way for some time, their companions prevailed on them to restore the dead body to its resting-place. The party passed several hours after dinner in what Bussy Rabutin acknowledges to have been a great debauch, singing the ribald songs, compounded of blasphemy and licentiousness, then in vogue at Paris. In the midst of the Bacchan-

alian uproar the Marquis of la Trousse arrived to go the round of the works with La Valliere before relieving him at his post. The latter started up, telling his friends not to disturb themselves as he would return immediately. La Trousse was accustomed, in a spirit of bravado which he mistook for heroism, to walk on the outside of the trenches, and thus expose his person, without any rational object, to the enemy's fire. La Valliere, not to be out-done in folly, followed his companion's example, and had hardly gone a few paces when his skull was shattered to pieces by a ball. His guests, quite unmoved by the news, continued their revel, with the exception of Jumeaux, who rushed off to ask the Prince for a post that had been held by his friend. The incidents of this revolting banquet, almost incredible as they appear to us, would not at that period have challenged particular notoriety, had not the calamities that overtook most of the actors in the hideous scene, and the popular belief that the outraged remains were the body of a saint, awakened unusual curiosity and horror. The conduct of the officers does not, however, appear to have been made a subject of official comment, or to have elicited any mark of disapprobation from Condé or the Regent.

The check he met with before Lerida did not tend to soothe the irritation which the Prince had

cherished against Cardinal Mazarin on account of imaginary grievances; and the destitute condition of the French army in Spain, which had been a main cause of his ill-success, furnished him with a juster ground of anger. His complaints on his return to Court were loud and vehement; but his support was too necessary to the government in the difficulties and dangers that now beset it, to permit the Regent or the Minister to show offence at his language. Mazarin, bending as was his wont before the storm, strove to propitiate his imperious protector by flatteries and submission, and by straining to the utmost, in desperate expedients, the crippled resources of the monarchy in order to place the army of Flanders, which Condé chose for himself, on an efficient footing for the campaign of 1648.

The position of France was now extremely critical. A long and costly war, and a corrupt administration, had ruined the finances and impoverished the people; and ill-advised measures of taxation had aroused an opposition in the capital formidable for its character and its strength, and every day growing in influence and intensity. The government could no longer obtain the most needful supplies. The State was threatened with paralysis. And during Condé's absence in Spain, the Archduke Leopold had carried everything

before him on the Flemish frontier. He was now preparing to invade Picardy at the head of a well-appointed army. A decisive victory could alone avert from France the disgrace of invasion, or a humiliating peace.

Condé, having generously advanced out of his own revenues the funds required to complete the equipment of his army, set out to oppose the Archduke, who lay with eighteen thousand men, including the veteran bands of the despoiled Duke of Lorraine, on the borders of Picardy. But hardly had the first movements of the campaign begun, when Anne of Austria recalled him to Paris to advise her how to resist the urgent demands of the Parliament. During his absence Leopold entered France, and having published an insulting manifesto offering a reward for the discovery of the French army, sought for everywhere in vain and supposed to be lost, laid siege to the town of Lens. Condé hastened back with fourteen thousand men and eighteen guns, to relieve the place, but only arrived to see it surrender to the enemy, who then took up a strongly entrenched position under its walls. The Archduke calculated that the impetuous temper of his antagonist would impel him, notwithstanding his inferiority in numbers, to assault the Spanish lines. But Condé had not fought the desperate battles of Fribourg

and Nordlingen, and been repulsed with disgrace from the walls of Lerida, without learning the prudence which had alone been wanting to him of the qualifications of a consummate general. Instead of the rash tactics, hardly redeemed by extraordinary genius from the reproach of foolhardiness, which had marked his previous campaigns, he put in practice a manœuvre, not more bold than masterly, for the purpose of enticing the enemy from his fortified camp.

Breaking up his own encampment in open day, he retired slowly over the undulating plain which stretched away from Lens, and which he had carefully studied. Marshal Grammont led the French van; the Prince followed with the main body, and the Marquis of Noirmoutier, with a strong force of cavalry, brought up the rear. On seeing the retrograde movement of the French, General Beck, with the troopers of Lorraine, issued from the Spanish lines to harass their retreat, and charging the rear guard, threw it into disorder. Reinforcements arrived for Noirmoutier, but Beck, also supported from his own side, continued to gain ground, till at length the Archduke, thinking the decisive moment had come for destroying the whole French army, advanced with all his forces into the plain. Meanwhile Condé had drawn up his infantry and artillery upon a gentle eminence, and had sent

orders to Grammont to return at full speed. In order to release his rear guard, now sorely pressed, and to gain time for the Marshal to come up, he charged the enemy in person at the head of all his remaining cavalry. But one of those unaccountable panics, to which even the best troops are subject, seizing his men while in full career, they suddenly wheeled round and galloped back to seek shelter behind their guns. The Archduke and Beck followed up their advantage with such vigour that, notwithstanding the firm bearing of Condé's infantry and gunners, and his own desperate efforts to rally the fugitives, the battle was almost lost, when Grammont appeared. Then the fortune of the day turned. The Marshal, charging with his usual impetuosity, checked the victorious progress of the Lorraine horse. Condé only required a short respite to re-form his squadrons, restore their confidence, and lead them back into the fight with the martial fury which no enemy had ever yet been able to withstand. The troops of Spain and Lorraine fought with the most determined gallantry. The Archduke performed the part of an able general and a brave soldier. General Beck more than sustained his high renown; but when he fell, mortally wounded, his men, disheartened by his loss, relaxed their efforts and were driven from

the field. Leopold escaped with difficulty by a precipitate flight; all his infantry, artillery, and baggage were captured. The victory of the French was the most complete of any in that age. Condé, as usual, had exposed himself to the greatest dangers. Two of his pages were killed at his side during the battle; but his greatest peril was incurred when the pursuit was over. Meeting Grammont as they both were returning in the evening to the French camp, he rode forward to embrace the Marshal. Their horses, which had been perfectly docile during the day, no sooner drew together than, as if possessed by furies, they rushed upon each other, and strove to tear each other to pieces. A timely pistol shot through the head of the Marshal's charger saved both riders from being frightfully lacerated.

The victory of Lens was the crowning glory of France in the long and exhausting struggle to which Cardinal Richelieu had challenged the house of Austria; it brought the Thirty Years' War to a close. Spain indeed, having concluded a separate truce with Holland, refused to be included in the treaty of Westphalia; but, crippled in power, and destitute of allies, her feeble and desultory efforts could not have been prolonged, had not the internal troubles of France afforded

her a breathing time, and eventually enlisted in her support the most terrible of her foes. Hardly had the battle been won when Condé was summoned to lead his victorious army against the insurgent city of Paris. The Civil War of the Fronde, a conflict unique in the voluminous annals of faction, had broken out in France. In order to render it intelligible, it is necessary to pass in brief review the state of the kingdom during the reign of Louis XIII. and the earlier years of the Regency of Anne of Austria.

## CHAPTER III.

THE history of the reign of Louis XIII. of France is in all important points the history of the rule of Cardinal Richelieu. The royal authority, during the first twelve years of that reign, had fallen into a state of impotency and contempt unknown, except for a short period preceding and succeeding the death of Henry III., during the previous century and a half. The relations of the great nobles of the kingdom to their sovereign bore a much nearer resemblance to the feudal anarchy that had existed before the reign of Louis XI., than to the loyal obedience which upheld the brilliant despotism of Francis I. The wars of the League had restored much of their ancient power. Henry IV., in bringing the long religious strife to a close, found it necessary to make concessions to his potent subjects, Catholic and Huguenot, which stripped the crown of a great part of its authority. At his death, Mary of Medicis, assuming the Regency during the

minority of her son, a sickly boy only nine years old, dismissed Sully, Villeroy, and the other experienced ministers of her husband, and delivered the reins of government into the hands of her low-born and rapacious Italian favourite Concini, whom she created Marshal of France and Marquis of Ancre. The Princes of the blood, the great Catholic nobles, the powerful Huguenot connexion, indignant at the rule of an insolent upstart, and counselled by the discarded ministers, plunged into revolt, wrung humiliating concessions from the Regent—who sacrificed the interests of her son to her blind partiality for Concini's wife—and kept the kingdom for years in constant turmoil. No sooner was one Civil War appeased by lavish grants than another broke out in some rival interest.

At length, in the year 1617, the young King, at the instigation of a gentleman of his household, named De Luynes, who had acquired complete mastery over the feeble and suspicious mind of his sovereign by his aptitude in the childish amusements—the snaring of small birds, the carving of little shrines, the painting of little pictures, the beating of drums—in which Louis delighted, ordered Vitry, Captain of his Guards, to arrest Concini, giving special instructions for the use of force in case of resistance. Vitry was a willing

and unscrupulous instrument. The bait of a Marshal's baton was dangled before his eyes by De Luynes; and without troubling himself about the formality of resistance on the part of his victim, he despatched Marshal D'Ancre in the court-yard of the Louvre. Louis, throwing up a window, applauded the deed. Vitry was made Marshal of France and Duke. De Luynes, created Duke and Peer, Prime Minister, and ultimately Constable, was endowed with the enormous wealth of the unhappy Italian, and with the matchless diamonds of the Italian's more unhappy wife, who was beheaded as a sorceress on the Place de Greve. To crown the fortunes of the aspiring favourite he espoused Marie de Rohan, only daughter of the Duke of Montbazon, then seventeen years old, the most beautiful, witty, wayward, and supremely fascinating woman of her time. His two brothers, obscure gentlemen, were also made Dukes and Peers, and obtained endowments suitable to their new rank. The queen-mother was deposed from power, and exiled to the castle of Blois.

In addition to extraordinary personal advantages, De Luynes possessed gracious manners, and a singularly amiable disposition, which disarmed envy, and won all hearts; but he was utterly destitute of the qualifications needed to

cope with the evils which oppressed the State. His ambition was limited to the quiet enjoyment of the splendid position to which the royal favour had raised him, and for this end he laboured, though with only partial success, to conciliate hostile interests. His chief danger, however, arose not from any inimical combination, but from the fickleness of his sovereign. The angry disgust which, after a few years, seized the jealous, moody mind of Louis at the astonishing spectacle of sudden greatness, which was the work of his own hands, must have proved fatal to the whole family of De Luynes had not the Constable's death, at the end of the year 1621, prevented his inevitable disgrace. The post of prime minister being now vacant, Mary of Medicis resumed her old empire over the mind of her son. The first use she made of her recovered influence was to obtain, much against the King's inclinations, a seat in the Privy Council, and a Cardinal's hat for her Chancellor, Jean Armand Duplessis de Richelieu, Bishop of Luçon. Then began that extraordinary career which changed the face of France and of Europe.

Whoever would know what the genius and energy of one man can accomplish, for the power and glory of a State, should study the history of France during the twenty years' administration of

Cardinal Richelieu. In 1622 the provinces and strong towns of the kingdom were parcelled out as Governments, many of them held by hereditary tenure, among the Princes of the Blood and the high nobility, who appointed and removed all subordinate functionaries at their own pleasure. In Brittany the Duke of Vendôme, in Guyenne the Duke of Epemon, in Languedoc the Duke of Montmorenci, in Champagne the Duke of Nevers, in Burgundy the House of Lorraine-Guise, surrounded by populations attached to them by habits of obedience or feudal ties, could, from behind the walls of numerous strongholds, bid defiance to the King. In the West and South the Huguenot community claimed nearly all the rights of an independent State. They refused submission to the royal mandates until these were ratified by their own Synod, and made treaties of alliance with foreign powers upon equal terms. Many of the most potent houses in France, Rohan, La Force, Bouillon, La Tremouille, Chatillon, Sully, were still of their body. Their powerful military organisation, and the possession of fortresses of great strength, enabled them to brave with impunity the anger of the Government, which their turbulent spirit constantly provoked. It was only in the previous year that Louis and the Constable de Luynes, at the head of all the

military force the Crown could muster, were repelled with disgrace from the Huguenot town of Montauban. In case of need La Rochelle gave easy access to the succours of England; and the Duke of Bouillon's independent principality of Sedan threw open France on the side of the Netherlands. In the East and South, the Spanish provinces of Franche Comté and Roussillon, and the dominions of the Duke of Lorraine, thrust like wedges through the frontier, and breaking up the integrity of the kingdom, were a perpetual menace to its security, and afforded support and refuge to malcontent nobles. Ever-recurring revolts, vexatious exactions and restrictions, paralysed industry and commerce. Innumerable feudal courts, possessing independent and conflicting jurisdictions, hampered the dispensing of justice. The roads were covered with robbers and assassins; nowhere was there any security for life or property. Even in Paris, in addition to the King's Courts, the Archbishop, the Abbess of Montmartre, the Grand Prior, the Abbot of St. Germain, and a number of noblemen exercised separate judicial rights. The safety of the capital was confided to forty-five decrepit watchmen; and crimes, at which humanity shudders, were daily perpetrated in the streets. Such was the internal condition of the kingdom. Abroad its influence was at the

lowest ebb. Never had the House of Austria been more united or triumphant. The strength of the great Spanish Monarchy, though waning, was still unbroken; and its prestige was far greater than its strength. In Germany the Emperor, Ferdinand II., aided by his able ally, Maximilian of Bavaria, was acquiring a position of power and preponderance, for which Charles V. had striven in vain. France, weakened by her own internal dissensions, could only look on in impotent anger, while an absolute supremacy in Europe was passing, almost without a struggle, into the hands of her ancient foes.

It was the ambition of Cardinal Richelieu to bring into subjection the unruly forces that distracted the kingdom, and make them elements of national strength; to build up from the chaotic materials of antiquated feudalism a powerful and united monarchy, which might dispute the supremacy of the house of Austria in Europe. Few men ever were gifted in a more eminent degree with all the qualifications of a great ruler. He had splendid genius, prescient and fruitful, capable of conceiving and elaborating the most stupendous designs; a judgment which was never dazzled by chimerical schemes; energy and resolution to which nothing was impossible. Modest, supple, affable, haughty, stern, unrelenting, according to

circumstances, he seemed to combine in himself a variety of characters; to be able to summon up at his will the most opposite qualities in aid of his ambition. Nothing was too vast, nothing too minute, for the grasp of his intellect. No circumstance, which had even a remote bearing on his policy, was too insignificant for his care. While transacting all the more important business of a great kingdom seething with agitation, and involved in complicated foreign relations, and at the same time personally directing an arduous campaign, he could find time to pen elaborate instructions for the guidance of some newly-appointed Court official. Clear-sighted in his aims, he pursued them with inexhaustible fertility of resource and unfaltering determination. As has been remarked by Bussy Rabutin, a competent and contemporary observer, from whom the foregoing estimate of Richelieu's capacity and character has been largely borrowed, it is difficult, when gazing on the noble features lit up by refined intellect and gracious benignancy which still live on the canvas of Philippe de Champagne, to understand his terrible reputation. In truth, he was by nature mild and placable. But the imperious necessities of his policy; the unscrupulous plots of princes and nobles, in concert with the foreign enemies of the realm, against

his power and life, for selfish ends; the treachery and ingratitude with which his benefits were so often repaid; and doubtless, in some measure, the fierce passions which wait upon a perilous career of triumphant ambition, led him occasionally to temper justice with an exceptional severity, which wore the odious complexion of tyranny. With the doubtful exception, however, of the Duke of Montmorenci, whose life was justly forfeited for open rebellion, supported by foreign powers, there is not one of the so-called victims of Richelieu whose character or designs deserve the slightest sympathy. Nor were any of his acts tainted with the perfidy and ingratitude which marked the conduct of Henry IV. and Sully towards the Duke of Biron.

It is curious to note how sectarian prejudice brands as crime in the great Cardinal what it lauds as virtue in the great Huguenot Duke. Historians who extol to the skies the wisdom and patriotism of Sully depict Richelieu in the darkest colours as a tyrannical oppressor. Yet the policy of the two ministers was essentially identical. The depression of the great nobles and the Huguenot league at home, the depression of the house of Austria abroad, were the cherished aims of Sully—great noble, and Huguenot though he was—as they afterwards became the cherished

aims of Richelieu. Both ministers laboured for the same ends; the difference was that the second brought to the work a far bolder genius and a stronger will.

If Richelieu was a redoubtable enemy, he was the most constant and generous of friends. For ability and devotion in his service, he thought no praise excessive, no recompense too splendid. And his government had one characteristic which distinguishes it honourably, not only from all contemporary governments, but from the governments of all other leading States of Europe down to quite recent times. This was the entire absence of religious intolerance. A devout believer in the creed of the Church, in which he held exalted rank, and in an age when religious animosities were running high, he knew no distinction of belief in the service of the State. He made war on the Huguenots, not as a dissenting sect, but as a political community, possessed of exceptional privileges which they abused to the detriment of the kingdom. The use he made of their complete subjugation was to place them in all respects on an equal footing with the Catholics. The Dukes of Bouillon and Schomberg and General Gassion commanded French armies under his administration, and the last two enjoyed his entire confidence. It is a striking satire upon the

value of the claims to our admiration advanced most boldly by writers of eminence on behalf of communities of men, and accepted by these communities themselves with the most complacent confidence; a curious example of the irony of history, that the principle of religious freedom, which Protestant nations always made their peculiar boast, and almost always repressed by cunning systems of savage intolerance, one of which, framed by the most powerful and free of them all, has been described by a great Protestant writer, as "more terrible than the ten Christian persecutions," was practised in Catholic France alone, during that part of the seventeenth century when the kingdom was absolutely governed in succession by a French and an Italian Cardinal, Richelieu and Mazarin.

Richelieu only shares the common fate of all great men who have been successful, and whose careers have brought them into collision with powerful interests, in having his merits depreciated by envy, and his defects exaggerated by malignity. There is nothing, perhaps, in history which gives a more painful shock to a generous mind than the revelation of the infirmities of a glorious spirit, of petty and degrading feelings harboured in a lofty soul; except it be the hideous joy with which baser natures gloat over and dis-

tort failings which disfigure natures, in other respects God-like, into some resemblance to themselves. Richelieu's opponents, vanquished in political strife, have taken a dastardly revenge for his superiority in their memoirs. It may freely be admitted that neither as a statesman nor as a man was he by any means perfect. The irregular grandeur of his character cast gigantic shadows. As a ruler, his policy struck not only at excessive privileges, but at legitimate rights; its tendency was to crush political freedom as well as anarchy. It may be said in extenuation that this is the fault of strong governments in periods of disorder and transition; that considering the times and the country in which he lived, and the work he had to accomplish, it was almost inevitable; that anarchy is more fatal to liberty than tyranny itself. He was one of the most generous and enlightened patrons of men of genius; one of the most zealous fosterers of literature and the fine arts that ever lived; yet his treatment of the illustrious Corneille seems to have been inspired by resentments of jealous vanity which would have dishonoured a starving poetaster, which betray kinship with the meanest passions of his countryman, Voltaire. The amusing story in the *Memoirs of the Count of Brienne*, in which the powerful minister is described as having been beguiled by Madame de

Chevreuse into dancing a saraband in appropriate trappings of green velvet, castanets, and silver bells, in order to win the love of Anne of Austria; and the equally circumstantial accounts of his midnight interviews in masquerade with the celebrated Marion de L'Orme, would seem to show that he discarded alike personal dignity and professional decency in the pursuit of pleasure. But it must in fairness be taken into account, that these anecdotes emanate from his deadly enemies at one of the most corrupt and unscrupulous periods of modern history; that they did not appear till after his death, when authoritative contradiction had become impossible; and that they all want impartial confirmation. Anne of Austria, in her unreserved revelations, many years afterwards, to Madame de Motteville, of the incidents of her married life, does not appear to have known anything of the story of the saraband. With every deduction which justice can claim on account of errors and shortcomings, Richelieu will ever rank among the master spirits of the world; and of the many illustrious public men who have adorned France, and who were strictly Frenchmen, there are few indeed who can boast a purer, not one who can boast a more splendid fame.

The difficulties inherent to the gigantic task, which Richelieu set himself to accomplish, were

aggravated by weakness or perverse opposition in quarters from which he might naturally have expected the most strenuous support. Louis XIII., shy, ill-educated, consumed by morbid melancholy, deeply but gloomily religious, a prey to constantly recurring fits of illness which brought him to the brink of the grave; devoted to unkingly, if innocent pursuits; incapable of governing by himself, yet sensitively jealous of the appearance of control; and easily influenced through his peculiar tastes; his smouldering impatience of political tutelage, and his conscientious scruples, could only be ruled by the nicest art and the firmest temper. There were in the Minister's favour, the King's despotic tendencies, passion for military distinction, shrinking disgust under the burthen of State cares to which he felt himself unequal, and above all the enormous faults of his own enemies. Though Richelieu soon succeeded in inspiring his Sovereign with admiration and awe, these, and not affection, formed the link that bound them together to the end.

Louis had been married at the age of fourteen, through the policy of Mary of Medicis, to Anne of Austria, eldest daughter of Philip III. of Spain, born in the same year as himself. Seldom has there been a more uncongenial union. Anne was beautiful, proud with more than traditional pride

of her race and country, fond of admiration and gaiety, daring, clever, and unscrupulous. The cold temperament of her husband, his joyless mood, which found its chief solace in singing dreary ditties of his own composing, and in prolonged fits of sullen musing, filled her with disgust. Her forced subjection, first to the ascendancy of De Luynes, and afterwards to the control of the Queen-mother, excited her bitter indignation. The precarious health of her husband, by constantly inspiring her with fallacious hopes of release from irksome ties, prevented her schooling her haughty humour into the submission and the show of sympathy which would have given her dominion over his mind. And after a time the unbounded influence of the brilliant and dissolute Duchess of Chevreuse fortified her rebellious spirit and corrupted her heart.

Richelieu, on assuming the direction of affairs, whether, as his detractors relate, prompted by a frantic passion, or, as is more probable, by motives of policy and good-feeling, strenuously endeavoured to win the young Queen's favour. But Anne, counselled by Madame de Chevreuse, rejected his advances with scorn, and openly proclaimed herself his foe. No sooner had his genius asserted its supremacy in the royal councils, no sooner had his policy begun to unfold itself, than they naturally

provoked fierce, wide-spread and stubborn antagonism. As the immediate and obvious effect of his measures was to increase the authority wielded by himself, he seemed to the great majority of Frenchmen, while really working out, in the interests of France and of civilization, an inevitable political and social revolution, to be merely obeying the tyrannical impulses of an insatiable personal ambition. The great Catholic nobles, the Huguenot confederacy, the Princes of the Blood, encouraged by the open or secret support of England, Spain, and Lorraine, arrayed themselves against his projects. His old patroness, Mary of Medicis, exasperated at the independent attitude towards herself, which the responsibilities of his position compelled him to assume, conceived for him a furious hatred, which he tried in vain to appease by submission, and even by tears. In concert with her daughter-in-law she urged her younger son, Gaston, Duke of Orleans, to form leagues with foreign powers against the throne of his brother, and the life of the Minister, the scheme of the confederates comprehending the marriage of Anne and Gaston in the probable event of the King's death or deposition. Her importunities, assailing him in periods of sickness and mental prostration, wrung from Louis more than once a solemn pledge to dismiss the Cardinal

from his councils. But the fortune and the indomitable will of Richelieu triumphed over all foes and all obstacles. The Huguenots, though aided by the whole power of England, saw their strongholds captured and their dangerous privileges abolished. The Princes of the Blood, and the great nobles, stripped of their governments, hereditary fiefs, and independent principalities, expiated their treason by death, outlawry, or imprisonment. Mary of Medicis, driven from France, died in exile at Cologne, in want of the necessities of life. Gaston of Orleans, discredited by the incapacity, cowardice and treachery, that caused the destruction of his accomplices in a succession of abortive conspiracies, lost the power of doing harm. Anne of Austria having forfeited for ever the regard and respect of her husband by the scandalous levity of her conduct, her anxiety to marry his brother, and her treasonable correspondence with the enemies of the kingdom, was subjected to the most humiliating restraints, and barely escaped destruction by throwing herself on the Cardinal's mercy. With Louis himself the relations of his Minister at last bore a strong resemblance to those which had existed between the Mayors of the Palace and the degenerate Sovereigns of the Merovingian dynasty; but the blood shed in the field and upon the scaffold

cemented not only the ephemeral authority of the Cardinal, but also the aggrandised and enduring authority of the House of Bourbon. Abroad, the subsidies, and afterwards the armed intervention, of France, enabled Gustavus Adolphus, and the Protestant chiefs who succeeded him in command, to crush for ever the power of the Emperor; while the conquest of Roussillon and Lorraine, the revolt of Catalonia, and the occupation of Savoy, attested the humiliation of Spain. Even the grave could not conquer the strong spirit of the great Cardinal. It ruled the councils of France long after the wasted body, its earthly tenement, worn out as a sword wears through its scabbard, had become dust. His dying wishes were more implicitly obeyed than ever was the political testament of a King of France. The statesmen whom he had formed continued after his death to direct the Government; and Cardinal Mazarin, whom on his death-bed he recommended to Louis as his successor, followed, though with unequal steps, in the political path of his master.

The character of Cardinal Mazarin, who is justly entitled to a foremost place among great modern statesmen, was cast in a very different mould from that of his illustrious predecessor. Crafty, with the deep and subtle craft of an Italian politician, wary and insinuating, rather than enter-

prising and bold, he trusted more to wiles than to vigorous action, and never resorted to force, for the compassing of an object, till he had exhausted all the arts of persuasion and intrigue. He was a master of all the learning and the accomplishments of the time. His knowledge of foreign politics was at once extensive and profound. He possessed rare gifts of eloquence and perspicuity in speaking and writing. Having exquisite natural taste, carefully cultivated by study and travel; being adorned in an eminent degree with personal grace and beauty, and with brilliant and agreeable qualities of mind; and blending in his manners the stately gravity due to a Spanish education, with the deferential courtesy of his Italian breeding, he had no rival in Europe as a finished diplomatist. As an adept in deceit, and in the whole dark science of state-craft, he perhaps has seldom been surpassed. But for a statesman of the so-called Machievellian school, he had two great defects. He wanted the ruthless will which marches to its goal without pity and without remorse; and he was deficient in the power of simulating honesty or of recognising that quality in others. Of a disposition gentle almost to timidity, he was apt to over-reach himself by finesse; and his habit of calculating too exclusively on the baser motives of human actions led

him sometimes into fatal blunders. Intercourse with him sooner or later infallibly awakened in friend and foe an uncomfortable feeling of being cheated. Without possessing the lofty range or the force of genius that distinguished Richelieu, his mind, though liable to be clouded by self-interest and by passing fears, was remarkable for acuteness, for the prescient sagacity of its views, for marvellous fertility of resource, and for a patient tenacity of purpose irresistible as destiny itself. "Time and I against any other two" was his favourite maxim. He seldom, if ever perhaps, postponed his private ends to the good of the State, but he generally shaped them in harmony with what he believed to be the public advantage. He belonged to the school of statesmen who held, or at least acted as if they held, that peoples were made for Kings; and in the main he carried out, by a feebler and more demoralising policy, the system of Government which he inherited from his predecessor. Although under the dominion of avarice, the meanest of all vices, and in a Minister like Mazarin, with despotic principles, unbounded opportunities, and a low standard of political morality, one of the most hurtful to a people, its influence was somewhat tempered by his love of magnificence and refined enjoyments, and his splendid patronage of the fine arts. He merits

the high praise of being the most clement of rulers. There is no other example in history of a minister of such insatiable ambition, guided by such arbitrary maxims, pursued and proscribed for so many years with such unscrupulous malignity, such furious rancour, and ultimately so triumphant over all his enemies, who treated his adversaries with equal forbearance, and so consistently shrank from dipping his hands in blood.

The origin of Mazarin was obscure ; his father, of Sicilian extraction, having been steward in the household of the great Roman family of Colonna. The young Gulio, born in 1602, was sent for his education to the University of Alcalá, in Spain. On his return to Rome, the interest of his patrons obtained for him a commission in the Papal Army. But although he never lost his military tastes, he soon relinquished the profession of arms for a career better suited to his genius. His skill in literary composition having attracted the notice of the Cardinals Barberini, nephews of the reigning Pontiff, Urban VIII., they took him under their protection ; and charmed by his versatile capacity and his amiable disposition, advanced him to important diplomatic employments in Italy and France. His new profession brought him, in the year 1630, during the Mantuan war, into contact with Cardinal Richelieu, who appreciating

his great abilities and his engaging qualities, loaded him with marks of esteem and affection. Mazarin happened to be in Paris in the year 1639 on a confidential mission from the Papal See, when the sudden death of Father Joseph de Tremblay deprived Richelieu of his most able and trusted councillor. The powerful minister fixed upon the Papal Envoy as the person best qualified to supply the loss, assigned him apartments in the Palais Cardinal, obtained for him the red hat which had been destined for the famous Capuchin, and admitted him to his entire confidence. Mazarin was especially useful to his benefactor as a medium of communication with the King and Queen. His gentle pliancy, and deferential bearing, soothed the jealous and irritable temper of Louis. His insinuating manners and perfect knowledge of the Spanish tongue won him the regard of Anne of Austria, now reduced to isolation by the death or banishment of nearly all her adherents.

On the death of Richelieu the position of his followers was eminently precarious. The existence of the King had long held by a thread. It was impossible that life could flicker much longer in his emaciated frame ; and his children were still infants. The statesmen of the school of the late minister, men of great ability and eager ambition, who had been absolutely devoted to

their patron, not only represented a policy odious to the great body of the nation, but had in many cases excited the personal enmity of the Queen, and of the great nobles of the realm. The House of Condé, aggrandized in an extraordinary degree by its alliance with Cardinal Richelieu, was their chief support; but the character of the Prince was proverbially shifty and self-seeking. It seemed as if the political structure reared by their master with such a bold and skilful hand would topple down in ruin on their heads. Louis, even while the impression of the solemn death-bed interview which terminated the momentous, ever varying, but never-broken relations which had bound him and his great minister together for twenty years, was still fresh on his mind, had displayed singular ingratitude and want of feeling. When the Cardinal's death was reported to him, not caring to dissemble his joy at being released from the servitude which he had neither known how to throw off nor to support with dignity, he exclaimed "I am at length a king." For a few weeks he seemed to enjoy his liberty, and the appearance of directing in person the government of the kingdom. In order, apparently, to convince his subjects that the severity which had hitherto distinguished his reign was solely due to the counsels of the deceased prelate, he granted

an amnesty for political offences. Princes of the Blood and great nobles, long entombed in dungeons, or forced to eat the bitter bread of exile, again thronged the Royalante-chambers at St. Germain. Every day added to the returned swarm of illustrious proscribed, who, gathering in excited groups, scowled with hatred and scorn at the adherents of the late minister, decked out in the dignities of which they had been despoiled; watched with ill-dissembled hope the manifest tracings of death upon the countenance of their sovereign; and crowded in noisy homage around Anne of Austria, their old accomplice in treason, and the destined instrument of their triumph and revenge. The leading figure among these haughty malcontents was the young Duke of Beaufort, second son of the Duke of Vendôme, and grandson of Henry IV., brave, handsome, rash, presumptuous, without capacity or conduct, but popular and high in the favour of the Queen.

To the dangers he shared in common with his colleagues was added, in the case of Mazarin, the odium nearly always provoked by the rapid elevation of a foreign adventurer of obscure extraction. The difficulties of his situation could only be surmounted by the exercise of all his art. Policy and his natural disposition suggested the same course of action. He set himself to attract friends

and disarm foes, by humility of deportment, by flattering caresses, and by constant offices of kindness. Naturally inclined to luxury and magnificence, he adopted a style of living plain even to meanness. He took pains to conceal his influence in the King's councils, and affected a wish to be permitted to retire to Rome. He paid obsequious homage to rank and power, and did not disdain to propitiate the most insignificant court official. His efforts to win the favour of the Queen, though secret, were unremitting. Nor was Anne of Austria, now in the ripe splendour of her voluptuous beauty, and aspiring to be Regent with absolute power, insensible to the charm which personal graces and delicate flattery lent to the councils of the astute politician.

Within five months Louis XIII. followed Cardinal Richelieu to the grave. When he felt his end drawing near, he summoned Mazarin and Baron Chavigny, the ablest and best beloved of Richelieu's political pupils, to assist him in preparing an Edict of Regency to regulate the government of France during the minority of his son. Mazarin prudently held aloof as much as possible from the discussions in the Council of State, resigning the lead to the bolder Chavigny, by whose advice a solemn Declaration of the King's will was drawn up, and formally registered

by the Parliament of Paris. To this settlement Louis exacted public oaths of obedience from his wife, from the great judicial and administrative bodies of the Capital, and from the principal personages of the realm. Ancient precedent and the necessities of the time compelled him, notwithstanding the well-founded distrust and dislike with which he regarded his wife and his brother, to appoint the one Regent and the other Lieutenant-General of the kingdom. But he vested a controlling power in a Council of Regency, composed, in addition to the Duke of Orleans, of the Prince of Condé, Mazarin, Chavigny, and his father Bouthillier, and the Chancellor Seguier.

The conduct of the Queen at this juncture was marked by all the perfidy of which her husband so often and so bitterly complained, and by a degree of political skill for which no one, with the exception perhaps of Richelieu, had hitherto given her credit. Knowing well that her own popularity, the passions of the great nobles, and the strong reaction that had already set in against the repressive system of the late minister, would sweep away the unusual restrictions imposed upon her by the King's testament, and, counselled by Mazarin to temporise, she took the required oath with cheerful alacrity, and with earnest protestations of devotion and gratitude. In order to guard

herself against the cabals of the Duke of Orleans, who had publicly questioned the legitimacy of her children; and to escape from the position of being merely the head of a turbulent and rapacious faction, of dependence on her old partizans, with whose political views she no longer sympathised, she formed a secret league for mutual support with the Prince of Condé, the mainstay of Richelieu's friends, and the mortal enemy of the House of Vendôme. The event fully justified her prudence and foresight. On the death of Louis XIII., the Duke of Beaufort and his party, treating the Edict of Regency, and the Council of Regency with contempt, carried Anne in triumph to Paris, amidst the acclamations of the people, as absolute ruler of the realm. The Lieutenant-General and the Council, influenced by Condé, who had been gained over, and by Chavigny, whose sagacity divined the necessities of the situation, determined upon a voluntary abdication of their functions. In a few days Louis XIV., then five years old, held his first Bed of Justice. Orleans, with ill-dissembled reluctance, announced to the High Court of Parliament the resignation of himself and his colleagues in the Government, and proposed to invest the Regent with unlimited authority. Condé signified his approval. A decree was passed amidst the greatest enthusiasm

by which the magistrates annulled the will of Louis XIII., which they had so recently affirmed with equal unanimity. Orleans was again created Lieutenant-General of the Kingdom by the Regent; and the members of the Council of Regency, with Condé as President, continued to hold their posts at her pleasure.

Anne of Austria had now attained the fruition of her hopes. But the exultation of success was soon sobered by the difficulties of her new position. She found herself between two irreconcilably hostile parties, each of which had contributed to promote her ambition. The one composed of the House of Condé, the connexions of Richelieu, the experienced statesmen and able soldiers he had raised around the throne, represented victory and the humiliation of the house of Austria abroad, and the plenitude of the royal authority at home. These urged her to recollect only that she was mother of the King of France, to observe the treaty engagements of the kingdom sealed on many a glorious field of battle, and to preserve in undiminished splendour the inheritance of her son. The other party, consisting of the majority of the great princes and nobles, her own old confederates, backed by the Church and by popular feeling, peremptorily demanded immediate peace without regard to existing alliances and public

faith, with the other Catholic powers; the restoration of the forfeited dominions and feudal powers of the depressed nobles; the confiscation of Richelieu's wealth, the degradation of his family and adherents, and the reversal of his policy. The very first acts of her authority as Regent revealed to her the inevitable dangers that beset her course. On her return to the Louvre from the Palace of Justice she had appointed several of her old adherents to seats in the Council of State, and made one of them, the Bishop of Beauvais, Prime Minister. But she also commissioned a confidential agent to offer Mazarin, who since the death of the king had secluded himself in his dingy lodgings, professing to his friends ignorance of the intrigues on foot, and despondency regarding his own prospects, the post of Vice-President of the Council. And in observance of her secret engagements with Condé, an intimation was conveyed to Chavigny, Bouthillier, and the Chancellor Seguier of her desire that they should retain their offices in the Ministry. Beaufort and his friends, almost beside themselves with amazement and anger, immediately assailed her with clamorous remonstrances, which she endeavoured, with only partial success, to satisfy by representing to them the necessity of temporising until she had acquired some knowledge of public affairs. They only con-

sented to wait until their mistress had the support of the presence and counsels of Madame de Chevreuse, whose return from her long exile in the Netherlands was daily expected, before, as they openly declared, transferring to themselves all the offices and governments which had been usurped during the late reign by the adherents of the new political system, and all the vast possessions acquired by the family of Cardinal Richelieu. The character and career of the extraordinary woman, upon whose return to Court such momentous issues seemed to hang, call for something more than a mere passing notice.

When the Duke of Luynes found himself suddenly raised from obscurity and indigence to the highest rank, and unbounded wealth, by the favour of Louis XIII. and the plunder of the unfortunate Concinis, his first care was to add lustre and strength to his new position by an alliance with one of the great families of France. The unrivalled charms, sparkling wit, and imperious spirit of Marie de Rohan, only daughter of the Duke of Montbazon, had, just then, burst upon the Court of France in a dawn which gave dazzling promise of the transcendent power which afterwards set the world in a flame. De Luynes, with the support of the King, sought Marie's hand in marriage. In order to promote his suit,

he laid at the feet of the proud young beauty the magnificent diamonds of the Marchioness d'Ancre, said to exceed in value those in the possession of any other European subject, and the office of Superintendent of the Queen's Household, the greatest which a woman could hold under the French Crown. The handsome person and winning manners of the favourite made an impression on Mademoiselle de Rohan's heart; his splendid offers dazzled her ambition, and she accepted his hand without reluctance. But her elevation at Court was opposed by an angry cabal. The young Queen resisted an appointment which placed at the head of her household a self-willed beauty but a year older, and of more brilliant attractions than herself. The Duchess of Montmorenci and the haughty Spanish dames who had hitherto formed Anne's establishment, refused to acknowledge the new Superintendent, and Louis had to exert the royal authority with some harshness, to make his will obeyed. Marie lived happily with her husband, and up to the time of his death, supported his interests with the courageous fidelity which was the finest feature of her character. During the first year of her widowhood, the miscarriage of Anne of Austria, caused by a fall while romping with Madame de Luynes in the long gallery of the Louvre, led to

the dismissal of the Duchess and her banishment from Court. A few months after her disgrace she married the Duke of Chevreuse, youngest son of Henry Duke of Guise, who had been murdered at Blois. This great alliance procured her recal to Court and her re-appointment to high office about the person of the Queen. In other respects her second marriage was unfortunate. Chevreuse, who had degenerated from his illustrious race in everything except personal beauty, was sunk in sloth and pleasure. The Duchess, neglected by her husband, threw off all moral restraint, gave free rein to her bold and wayward spirit, and with qualifications for success which have seldom been equalled, launched out upon that stormy career of intrigue in love and politics, which soon made her the most famous woman in Europe.

The coldness which had at first existed between Anne of Austria and the young Superintendent of her household gradually gave place to feelings of confidence and affection. Madame de Chevreuse espoused the quarrels of her mistress, who keenly resented the precedence allowed to the Queen-mother by the jealous distrust of the King, with the passionate ardour of her nature. Richelieu, then rising rapidly in power, conceived for her a profound admiration which nothing was ever able to extinguish. He spared no effort to win her

over to his interests. But she treated his advances with galling mockery, turned him into ridicule with the Queen, and was the soul of every conspiracy that troubled his administration. A large share of the faults and the unhappiness of Anne of Austria's married life must be attributed to the evil influence of Madame de Chevreuse. She encouraged the Queen in her ill-judged course of political cabal, and domestic contumacy. In concert with her lover, Lord Holland, she was the promoter and confidante of the Queen's liason with the Duke of Buckingham; and bore a principal part in the celebrated midnight revels in the gardens of the Louvre and at Amiens which cast dishonour on the throne of France. She was the most active member of the conspiracy of the Prince of Chalais for the assassination of Richelieu and perhaps of the King, and the marriage of Anne of Austria with the Duke of Orleans. Chalais, betrayed and deserted by Orleans and his other associates, was sustained in prison, and even to the foot of the scaffold, by her fearless devotion. Her multiplied offences naturally provoked the indignation of Louis XIII. He would have shut her up in the Bastille, but at the Cardinal's intercession, she was exiled for a few months to her chateau at Dampierre, and then permitted to retire to the Court of the Duke of Lorraine.

The Minister, however, soon found that the implacable Duchess was a more formidable foe in exile than at the Court of France. Wandering restlessly from one country to another, impelled by vanity, ambition and hatred, she compelled sovereigns and statesmen of the most opposite views and character to confess the power of her fascinations and become accomplices in her schemes. Men and women, the most virtuous and the most abandoned, alike found points of irresistible attraction in the curiously chequered nature of the brilliant Frenchwoman. Admired and fêted at the Courts of Madrid, London, Brussels, and Nancy, she raised up enemies everywhere against the French Government, and knit together powerful foreign confederacies to aid the efforts of domestic insurrection. She and her party would have seen with joy the troops of Spain and Lorraine penetrate into the heart of France from the East, while the English advanced victoriously from the Huguenot fortresses in the West, so that the successful invasion should hurl the detested Cardinal from power.

Yet in the very midst of their mortal duel it seemed as if Richelieu and Madame de Chevreuse suddenly agreed to bury their animosities and unite their interests. After the final discomfiture of the caballings of Mary of Medicis, at the very moment when she was exulting in assured success,

on the memorable "Day of Dupes," the Cardinal made the Marquis of Chateauneuf Keeper of the Seals. Chateauneuf was a favoured lover of the Duchess. Delighted at his advancement, and anxious to witness his good-fortune, she offered her friendship to Richelieu. The Minister, ever willing to convert her into a friend, induced the King to permit her to return to the French Court, and to have unrestricted access to Anne of Austria. But the plots against his administration were continued without interruption; and after a time he discovered that Chateauneuf, who had given a strong proof of devotion by presiding at the trial of his early benefactor the Duke of Montmorenci, debauched by his mistress, was betraying the secrets of State to Anne of Austria, and habitually reviling himself with the grossest license of accusation and invective. The treacherous Keeper of the Seals was condemned to perpetual imprisonment, under harsh restrictions, in the citadel of Angouleme. Madame de Chevreuse was ordered to retire again to Dampierre, and strictly forbidden to hold communication with the Queen.

Nothing daunted by ill-success, she continued her intrigues with foreign powers; and journeying up to Paris disguised as a peasant-woman, held secret interviews with Anne of Austria in the Convent of Val de Grace. The spies of the Cardinal

detected these stolen visits of his fair enemy. The Duchess was hurried away from Dampierre to a melancholy chateau in the gloomy depths of a vast forest near Tours; and, what she resented as unpardonable malice on the part of the Minister, was committed to the rigorous control of her husband. Richelieu, however, soon relented to her expostulations, permitted her to live at Tours, where she completely captivated the simple old Archbishop, and supplied her liberally with money. She remained at Tours carrying on secret correspondence with the Queen, and with Spain, Lorraine, and the banished nobles, until the detection of her treasonable intrigues by Richelieu placed the life of Anne of Austria herself at his mercy. Then the Duchess, justly fearing that she had exceeded the utmost limits of forbearance, resolved to fly the country. Leaving Tours in her coach, as if for an afternoon drive, she attired herself in the dress of a cavalier, sent back the equipage, with the blinds drawn down, by a circuitous route, and mounted a horse which had been stationed at a convenient point caparisoned for a journey. Her splendid jewels, the bequest of her first husband, were committed, on the road, to the charge of the young Prince of Marsillac. Riding post, without attendants, she traversed the southern provinces of France, meeting with ludicrous adventures,

from which she extricated herself with peculiar gaiety and sang-froid, and finally crossed the Pyrennees in safety. But although received at the Courts of the powers hostile to France with almost regal honours, Madame Chevreuse, a true Frenchwoman, pined amidst the most splendid scenes of foreign capitals for the delights of Parisian society. After a short time, she made fresh overtures with the view of obtaining permission to return to France. The Cardinal, always indulgent to his beautiful enemy, and no longer fearing her influence over the Queen, required from her only submission, and a promise of amendment. But Anne of Austria, who now had her own reasons for dreading the presence of her restless friend, secretly contrived the means of putting a stop to the negociations.

At the time of Richelieu's death, the Duchess had been six years in exile; years of disappointment and chagrin, which made sad havoc in the peerless charms, which thrice that period of active intrigue had touched only to improve. And the event which might have been counted on as the termination of her wanderings, seemed likely to render them eternal. Louis XIII. specially excepted her from the amnesty he granted for political offences, and by his last testament condemned her to perpetual banishment from the

French Court. When the Parliament of Paris had annulled this will, the Regent, with apparent cordiality, but real reluctance, despatched missives of recal to her old ally, then the guest of the Archduke Ferdinand, at Brussels. The Duchess and the Flemish Court, confident of her unbounded empire over the mind of Anne of Austria, and believing that her return to France would be immediately followed, notwithstanding the recent victory of Rocroi, by the entire reversal of Richelieu's political measures, publicly manifested undignified exultation. In council with her Spanish friends she mapped out the future policy of France, and accepted their premature gratitude for an advantageous peace with a gracious condescension which was untroubled by a single doubt. Departing from Brussels attended by the whole Court, welcomed along her route by the Flemish and French authorities with extraordinary public honours, she slowly pursued her triumphal progress towards Paris, disdainful of the ominous warnings transmitted to her through common friends by her irritated mistress, of the revolution which circumstances had wrought in the Regent's feelings and opinions.

It must be admitted that the party of great nobility and their foreign allies had apparently strong grounds for satisfaction at the change of

government in France. Few even amongst those most experienced in the crooked ways of political life entertained a doubt as to the side to which the Regent would incline. She was known to have lent her sanction to most of the plots formed in the late reign by the feudal party, in concert with her brother the King of Spain; plots which did not always respect the crown, perhaps the life, of her husband. She was, notoriously, the bosom friend of the most active spirit of that party; and even in exile Madame Chevreuse had continued, seemingly to the very last, not only to inspire the councils of her friends, but to rule the heart of her mistress. In the long struggle for power, Anne, as she and her partizans loudly proclaimed, had received at the hands of Richelieu and his creatures not only great injuries, but insults devised with ingenious malice to outrage her feelings as a queen and a woman. She had been more than once rescued from terrible perils, provoked by her imprudence, by the self-immolating fidelity of devoted adherents. Proud of her lineage and of her beauty, imperious and self-willed, courageous even to temerity, quick and apparently tenacious in her feelings, Anne did not seem one who could find it easy to forget an obligation or an injury. It was natural that her accession to sovereign rule should make the followers of the late Minister tremble

for their safety; that her tried partizans whom the prisons had disgorged, or who had flocked around her from banishment, should exult in anticipation of the signal vengeance and the splendid rewards with which the haughty daughter of the Caesars would requite so much devotion and so many wrongs. Moreover, Anne was a Spanish Infanta, warmly attached to her brother, the Catholic King, in whose interests she had more than once betrayed her adopted country; warmly attached to the Catholic faith, although she might occasionally temper the severity of her religious principles by laxity of practice. The ties of family and religion bound her to dissolve the unholy league, which to the scandal of Christendom, a Prince of the Church had formed with heretical powers, in order to check the triumphant march of Catholicity in Germany.

But there were causes, some unsuspected at that time, some not sufficiently taken into account, which operated so as, in a great measure, to falsify the hopes and fears to which her assumption of the Regency had given birth. Her real nature was a sealed volume even to her most intimate friends. Not even the sharp-witted Duchess of Chevreuse seems to have harboured a suspicion of the strong-willed ambition and the deep duplicity which lay at the foundation of the

character of the seemingly pliant beauty, so greedy of admiration, and so prone to levity, of all whose rash escapades in love and politics, of whose most secret moments she had been long the confidante. And, during the last five years of his rule, Anne, unknown to all her friends, appears to have been in intimate, though carefully concealed, alliance with Cardinal Richelieu. At that terrible juncture of her life, when the Cardinal, having discovered that his military plans were betrayed and his secret negotiations foiled by her treachery, charged her with high treason in the Council of States; when the faithful agent of her political crimes, La Porte, was seized and flung into a dungeon of the Bastile, where his constancy would probably be tested by the rack; when, in an agony of despairing terror, she besought the Prince of Marsillac to carry her out of France; when the beautiful and virtuous Mademoiselle de Hautefort, throwing to the winds, with the noblest self-devotion, the love of the King, her own safety, and, what she valued far more, her reputation, in order to rescue her mistress from destruction, penetrated into the Bastile, disguised as a soubrette, to communicate with La Porte, whose heroic fidelity extorted a warm tribute of admiration from the baffled minister; and when all these efforts, and even her own wanton

perjury in the Holy Eucharist were of no avail against the clear proofs in the Cardinal's possession, Anne threw herself on Richelieu's mercy, and purchased safety by unconditional submission. She continued to be the object of the ardent loyalty of her old friends, who confided to her all their plots. There is a good reason to believe it was from her the Cardinal, oppressed by the gloom of mortal illness and approaching disgrace at Tarascon, received the mysterious packet which enabled him to crush the conspiracy of Cinq Mars, and finally establish his power.

Richelieu, on his part, rendered the humiliating restrictions which Louis XIII. imposed on his wife less intolerable, and promoted her interests. Aided by a seasonable storm, which drove the King for a night's shelter to his wife's apartments in the Louvre, the only habitable portion of the Palace, he brought about a renewal of conjugal relations, which had been interrupted since the conspiracy of the Prince of Chalais. This reconciliation resulted in the birth of a Dauphin after a barren nuptial of twenty years. We have the Queen's own public testimony to the effect that had the great minister survived Louis XIII. she would, if possible, have added to his power. Mother of a king and ruler of a

mighty kingdom she had no longer the views and interests of the neglected childless wife, encompassed by the creatures and oppressed by the domination of a triumphant enemy. The point of most moment to her was no longer a question of persons, but a question of State policy; not so much whether one of two rival factions should prevail, as whether the absolute authority of the King should be established on the wrecks of the feudal system, or the over-grown power of the nobles should again overshadow the throne. And it required a very short experience of governing to teach her that to break with the experienced politicians of Richelieu's party would be to throw the kingdom, at a perilous crisis, into inextricable confusion. Mazarin and Chavigny held in their hands the threads of a net-work of political schemes which embraced half of Europe. They alone possessed the ability and knowledge of affairs required to steer the vessel of the State through the perils of a period of foreign war and internal transition. The feudal party, long ostracised, and for the greater part incapable, lost no opportunity of displaying equal ignorance and presumption. Their swelling self-conceit and fussy incompetency soon won for them the nickname of "The Importants." The Marquis of Chateaufort, the only able and ex-

perienced statesman they could boast, broken by twelve years of solitary imprisonment, and proscribed by the fierce enmity of the House of Condé for the part he had played in the tragic downfall of the last Duke of Montmorenci, sought only a tranquil retreat at his country house of Montrouge. Their ostensible leader, the Bishop of Beauvais, was, in the words of Cardinal de Retz, "a mitred fool;" "an idiot of idiots." And, in addition to the disadvantages suggested by a comparison of persons, to hand over to the Importants the reins of Government would be to goad into revolt an able and powerful party, headed by the wily Condé and his heroic son, and to undo the labours of Cardinal Richelieu. Thus new motives, born of new political circumstances, had gradually estranged Anne of Austria from her old friends. Another consideration, springing from softer emotions, and perhaps equally potent, had also begun to influence her conduct. The various ability and political knowledge of Mazarin, his handsome person, graceful manners, and absolute devotion to her personal interests, untrammelled by French associations or sympathies, enchained her understanding and her heart.

Still the event of the struggle was long doubtful. It is evident from Mazarin's secret memoranda

how great and how protracted were his fears and his uncertainty. When Madame de Chevreuse arrived in Paris she was received kindly, though somewhat coldly, by the Regent; the feudal party, still supported by the popular re-action, and numbering in its ranks the great majority of the clergy, nobility, and magistrates, and all Anne's favourite ladies, ranged itself under her banner. Had she played her cards with judgment, and consented to temporise in consideration of the difficulties of her mistress's position, she might, perhaps, have ultimately won the game. Old associations of friendship and service, the influence of religion, and the ties of family, the claims of gratitude and the dread of dishonour, were brought to bear, in all their force, on the Queen's mind by advocates to whose remonstrances, venerable character, or proved devotion gave almost irresistible weight. Anne would gladly have made considerable sacrifices in order to reconcile the rival factions and propitiate her old friends. She cheerfully abandoned to their hatred Chavigny, to whose counsels she attributed the last testament of her husband. Chavigny had been Mazarin's earliest friend and patron in France, and the two statesmen had continued up to this time bound to each other in close friendship; but the Cardinal connived without compunction at

the disgrace of such a formidable competitor. He also, by the Queen's desire, made repeated overtures to Madame de Chevreuse for a union of interests, offering in return splendid advantages for herself and her friends. But the imperious Duchess, not deigning to inform herself of the real character of the Regent, or of the changes which time and circumstances had wrought during her six years of exile, spurned his advances, and insisted, as a preliminary act of justice, on the immediate restoration of Chateauneuf to the high office he had forfeited. Mazarin, however, had made up his mind to retire from France rather than accept such an able and unscrupulous colleague. And the Princess of Condé, whose wise counsels and tried friendship had just weight with the Regent, declared that the restoration of the late Keeper of the Seals to a leading post in the Government would alienate from it the support of her husband and son.

When Anne of Austria's positive refusal to recall Chateauneuf opened the eyes of the Importants to the altered state of her relations with them, their astonishment and fury knew no bounds. They overwhelmed her with the most bitter reproaches, with threats and insults. The Court rang with their angry complaints, not less distasteful to the Queen because in a measure well-founded, and

with obscene jests which made her blood boil. She had become the political pupil of Mazarin, and the private conferences which she held late into every night with her handsome mentor, scandalised her friends, and furnished his opponents with a fertile theme for scurrilous lampoons. The insolent freedom and even rudeness of the Duke of Beaufort, who on one occasion went so far as to turn his back on her with a contemptuous gesture, before the whole Court; the arrogant lectures of the Duchess of Chevreuse; and the hostile attitude of the rest of the party gradually stifled her natural feelings of compunction for the line of policy she found it her interest to pursue.

Mazarin shaped his conduct with incomparable art, and turned every circumstance to the best account. The quarrel between the Duchesses of Longueville and Montbazon, breaking out at a seasonable moment, linked the House of Condé more firmly to his cause, and enabled him with security to deal his adversaries a blow from which they never recovered. Madame de Chevreuse and Beaufort, rendered desperate by defeat and the exile of Madame de Montbazon, and unable to dislodge their wily antagonist by less criminal means, contrived a plot for his assassination. The Cardinal, well served by his spies, narrowly escaped with his life, and used the oppor-

tunity to bring matters to a crisis. Repairing to the Council of State, he demanded permission from the Regent to retire to Rome, unless she valued his services sufficiently to protect him from the malice of his enemies. He was warmly supported by the Prince of Condé, who detested the House of Vendôme. The Regent, now completely devoted to him, and weary of the insolence of the "Importants," agreed to sustain him by decisive measures. By her command, Beaufort was arrested at the Louvre, and shut up in the fortress of Vincennes. The Duke of Vendôme, Madame de Chevreuse, and, later on, even Madame de Hautefort, whose romantic loyalty and noble character adorn the pages of history and fiction, were banished from Court. The simple Bishop of Beauvais being no longer required to act as a screen to the favourite, was sent to his diocese. The most perilous services in the late reign, and the most humble submission to the new Government were not sufficient to atone for honest consistency and want of political foresight. The ingratitude of Anne of Austria was complete; the policy of Richelieu triumphed, and Cardinal Mazarin took the helm as acknowledged Prime Minister.

## CHAPTER IV.

THE first few years of Cardinal Mazarin's administration, if not unruffled by occasional storms, were on the whole sunny and tranquil. The impulse which the mighty genius of Richelieu had given to the State machine, carried it along smoothly for a long period after his death; and the milder policy of his successor rendered its pressure less galling. The nation, relieved from the iron grasp in which it had writhed for twenty years, breathed again with something of the rapture of recovered freedom. There was little open opposition. The Regent was gracious, profuse in her bounties, and popular. A witty courtier, commenting on the general satisfaction, declared that the French language was reduced to the five words, "The Queen is so good." The Minister was prudent and conciliating. The Court was splendid, and the arms of France were crowned with unprecedented glory. The vigour and decision with which the Importants had been quelled, caused

the temporising state-craft of Mazarin to be ascribed to magnanimity and not to weakness.

Madame de Chevreuse alone of the Minister's foes stood forth in active opposition, undaunted and implacable. Banished to her country-house in Touraine, she resumed her treasonable correspondence with Spain, which in less fortunate days had been so zealously promoted by the Regent. But she soon found that she could not hope from the vigilant rancour of an ungrateful mistress, or the insensible heart of the Italian Cardinal, the partial indulgence she had so often experienced from Richelieu. A secret agent of the Government arrived at Tours to conduct her, as a state prisoner, to the Castle of Angouleme. The daring spirit which years before had borne her from the same spot, in the guise of a handsome young cavalier, in adventurous flight across the Pyrennees, animated her still; but the generous enemy who had supplied the funds for her romantic enterprise no longer existed. Penniless, but carrying concealed in her girdle the famous Cincini diamonds, she escaped from her house at night in disguise. Her daughter, a young girl of singular courage and beauty, was her only companion. The fugitives set out on foot for the coast of Brittany, braved extraordinary hardships, perils, and fatigues, and succeeded in reaching St. Malo.

The kindness of a Breton nobleman provided them with passages on board a ship bound for England; but the vessel was captured by an English man-of-war in the service of the Parliament, and the Duchess being recognised as a friend of Queen Henrietta Maria, was carried a prisoner to the Isle of Wight. It was proposed to deliver her up to the Regent. Fortunately for her, one of her old admirers, Lord Pembroke, was Governor of the Island, and he allowed her to depart for the Low Countries. The ill-starred wanderers reached Dunkirk in a lamentable plight, destitute of the commonest necessities. The Duchess had only left her the mortifying resource of imploring the compassion of her old friend, the Archduke, from whom she had parted amidst such triumphal pomp, and with such magnificent promises, little more than a year before. Fallen and cheerless in themselves, and still sadder by contrast, were the fortunes of Madame de Chevreuse in her third exile from France. The political influence which formerly had made her an honoured guest at the greatest Courts of Europe, had in a large measure gone from her; and time and disappointment had dimmed the joyous sparkle of her wit, and the lustre of her radiant beauty. She took up her residence at Liege, pouring forth furious, but unheeded de-

nunciations against Mazarin, or eating away her heart in sullen anger, until the return of troubled times restored her to her beloved Paris; to that life of reckless gaiety and restless intrigue which she loved so well.

Isolated cases of caballing like this of Madame de Chevreuse had, however, little effect on the general tranquillity of the kingdom. These were afterwards known as "the fair days of the Regency."

But the golden calm that glittered on the surface of events was delusive and transitory. Beneath it were at work all the elements of confusion; ill-defined, uncertain and oppressive authority; co-ordinate and conflicting claims and jurisdictions; the just resentments that spring from the constant violation of the rights of individual liberty and of property; the less just but more fierce resentments of depressed privilege, balked ambition, and exasperated pride; political and social corruption; and, underlying all, a vast writhing mass of helpless and hopeless misery. It was an age of transition. The whole mechanism of society was deranged. There was a want of harmony among the orders, a want of stability in the institutions of the State. The feudal system had been overthrown, but its ruins heaped everywhere in massive obstruction cum-

bered the land. The strong monarchical constitution which Richelieu had built up, he wanted leisure in his gigantic struggle with the House of Austria to consolidate and complete. The interests and pretensions he had crushed down began, as the memory of his rule grew fainter, to assert themselves again. Nor were these all of a character prejudicial to the State. Not only the selfish ambition of the great nobles, but also the ancient policy and patriotic aspirations of the Parliaments of the Kingdom, and more especially of the Parliament of Paris, aimed at confining the royal prerogative within straiter limits.

Until the 15th century the Kings of France had derived nearly the whole of their ordinary revenues from the royal domains. To supply the extraordinary expenses of Government, taxes were voted by the three Estates of the realm, and with one exception were levied in equitable proportions upon all classes. The exception was a direct tax called "*la taille*," which fell exclusively on the Third Estate, the nobles being exempted from it in consideration of the peculiar military obligations imposed upon them by the feudal system. Even the *taille*, however, could not be raised without the consent of the three Estates. Charles VII., by the assistance of the nobles, obtained from the nation, then smarting from the calamities that

resulted from the English wars, the captivity of John, and the madness of Charles VI., the right of levying the *taille* by his own authority, in order to afford his people more effectual protection. As has been remarked by De Tocqueville, one of the ablest of modern French writers, this fatal concession was the origin of most of the political evils which have since afflicted France. In the beginning the *taille* amounted to no more than twelve hundred thousand livres, and was scarcely felt. But the French Kings soon increased it tenfold, and tacked on to it four other taxes, each of them as onerous as itself. The command of this large revenue enabled the Sovereign to maintain a standing army, which made him absolute ruler of the kingdom, and to dispense with the aid of the three Estates; the nobles conniving at innovations which increased their privileges and lightened their burdens, but prepared the way for universal servitude.

As the growing monarchy burst asunder its feudal trammels, the Convocation of the States-General came to be regarded as an extraordinary, and it generally proved an ineffective remedy for the perils or disorders of the kingdom; as a humiliating confession which every ruler shrank from, of scandalous misgovernment, or national calamity. In ordinary times the necessary work

of legislation and finance was accomplished by means of Royal Edicts issued from the Council of State and registered in the first judicial court of the kingdom, the Parliament of Paris.

The proceeds of partial taxation soon proving insufficient to supply the ever-increasing expenditure of the Government, new resources were found in the creation and sale of innumerable public offices, which clogged every department of the administration. These offices, carrying with them special privileges, chiefly of immunity from the *taille*, were eagerly purchased by the rich inhabitants of the towns. The evils and the confusion produced by the multiplication of useless functionaries were enormous. Richelieu was said to have swept away one hundred thousand of these offices, but they soon sprang into existence again out of the necessities of the State. It was a favourite financial expedient of needy rulers arbitrarily to abolish posts which had been conferred for life, and almost immediately to re-establish in order to sell them again; the process being repeated until the strange avidity with which the French citizen sought after a place in the Administration was overpowered by the dread of confiscation. The Government also, whenever it was able, contracted loans at ruinous interest, which, however, was

seldom paid. In fact, the Kings of France shrank from no means of procuring supplies, no matter how dishonourable or desperate, which might enable them to avoid calling together the Estates of their realm.

The increase of the King's prerogative was peculiarly oppressive to the commonalty. The clergy had their own assemblies, and their special privileges. To them and to the nobles, who were exempt from direct taxation, who had been relieved at the expense of the poorest class of the population from the equivalent obligations of military service imposed on them by the old feudal constitution, who monopolised public honours and employments, and possessed immunities which few sovereigns had either the wish or the power to infringe, the change was of little moment. But the Third Estate, which bore the weight of the public burthens, being deprived of the old constitutional means of representing their grievances and compelling redress, and being shut out from political life, found themselves without a voice in the State or a share in its prizes, exposed to the capricious tyranny of irresponsible power, and ground down by arbitrary exactions.

In this deplorable condition the Third Estate found occasional, though generally unsuccessful,

champions, in the Parliaments or High Courts of Justice of the realm. There were eight of these great judicial bodies, the Parliament of Paris and seven provincial Parliaments; and with the inferior Courts they numbered forty thousand magistrates. The magisterial offices were acquired by purchase, conferred considerable dignity and emolument, especially in the capital, and were held for life. The Duke of Sully had, at the suggestion of a subordinate financier named Paulet, introduced a custom, by which the magistrates, in consideration of paying to the Crown an annual tax, called "*le droit annuel*" or "*la Paulette*," amounting to a sixtieth part of the original purchase-money, obtained the privilege of disposing of their posts, like other property, by will, or in case of intestacy, of securing the reversion of them to their natural heirs. This privilege was granted for periods of nine years, renewable at the pleasure of the King; and, though the termination of a period might sometimes furnish occasion for an extraordinary demand upon the purses of the magistrates, no desire had been shown by any minister to extinguish a custom which, if strange, worked well, because it was in harmony with the genius of the people. It was not uncommon to find members of the same family holding magisterial appointments for several succeeding generations. In

this manner was formed a nobility of the robe, sprung from the bourgeois class, of high legal training and culture, renowned for its independence and integrity, possessing considerable influence, not only on account of its elevated character and functions, but also of its popular sympathies, and illustrating the annals of France by many splendid examples of learning, courage, and virtue.

The Parliament of Paris held pre-eminence among the judicial bodies of the kingdom. It was the final Court of Appeal and the King's own Court, where he held Beds of Justice and caused his edicts to be registered. It counted among its members the Princes of the Blood and the peers of the realm, and had jurisdiction over them. In the Palace of Justice it possessed an august temple worthy of its venerable dignity. Around it, in the same spacious edifice, clustered four inferior Courts, of Inquests, Requests, Aids, and Accounts, which, on occasions of great public or professional interest, its First President was accustomed to convoke for the purpose of general deliberation. In troubled periods, when the Executive was weak, and particularly during a Royal minority, it frequently asserted its freedom, and refused to give by registration the force of laws to oppressive or unpopular mandates of the Crown. It claimed

the right of freely discussing the edicts it was called upon to register, and of rejecting those it disapproved. But, in the eyes of the Sovereign, it was the duty of Parliament to register all his edicts, and its liberty of dissent was limited to a barren right of remonstrance, which he was always free to disregard. He was accustomed to repress its opposition by holding a Bed of Justice and causing the obnoxious decree to be entered upon the journals in his presence; by imprisoning refractory members; and even by banishing the whole body to some provincial town. Richelieu, in order to annihilate its pretensions, compelled the Parliament of Paris to register a decree declaring its own incompetency to meddle with affairs of State. But on the death of Louis XIII., the Regent, seeking support from all quarters, had revived the ambitious hopes of the members of the High Court by submitting, contrary to Mazarin's advice, her husband's political testament to their judgment, by accepting unrestricted authority from their hands, and by promising to be guided on all occasions by their counsels. The Parliament of Paris indeed claimed to be, by ancient usage, the guardian of the Sovereign during his minority; and its members, though animated by patriotic sentiments and full of zeal for the interests of their order, were generally governed

by a spirit of wise moderation, and of deep reverence for the Royal authority. But the inferior Courts, to the offices of which less responsibility and less consideration attached, contained many magistrates of more turbulent and ambitious temper, who were strongly stirred by the awakening of popular freedom in a neighbouring country. The bold spirit of inquiry and innovation which found voice in the subordinate chambers, insensibly stimulated the views of the higher magistrates. Encouraged not only by its relations with the Regent, and the internal situation of France, but also in some degree by the example of resistance to tyrannical power which England was at that time exhibiting, the Parliament of Paris was not indisposed to seize a favourable occasion of restraining the abuses of the prerogative, and at the same time of vindicating and augmenting its own political importance.

The discontent of the great nobles of the feudal party and their numerous adherents among the lesser nobility was a pregnant source of danger, not only to the tranquillity, but to the welfare of the kingdom, because they were actuated mainly by sordid motives, and acknowledged in their public conduct no principle of patriotism or justice. An unusual combination of circumstances, skilfully turned to account by the arts of Mazarin,

rendered them unable during many years to arise from the political quagmire into which they had been precipitated by their own folly and the vigour of the Regent. The policy of Richelieu had destroyed much of their ancient power. Their proceedings at the commencement of the Regency had discredited them in the eyes of the nation. For the first time during a long period in the history of France they were totally bereft of the support of the Princes of the Blood. Their old chief, the Duke of Orleans, now Lieutenant-General of the realm, but with little real authority or influence, was absolutely ruled by his favourite the Abbé la Riviere, whose services Mazarin had purchased by the promise of a Cardinal's hat. With La Riviere's assistance, Monsieur was alternately terrified and cajoled by the Regent into a docile acquiescence in all her measures. The House of Condé, gorged with offices and radiant with glory, steadily supported a system which gratified all its wishes. The princes of Vendôme, banished or imprisoned, sought by abject submission and by a family alliance with the all-powerful minister, to recover the advantages they had lost. Stripped of their dignities, cast off by the Regent, forsaken by their natural leaders, and depressed by a long series of disasters, the party of the old nobility were reduced to a state of passive dissatisfaction.

Mazarin had weakened them still further by playing upon the selfish aspirations of their leading members in separate negotiations, and by keeping alive the hopes of all with occasional favours, and unbounded promises. But the multitude of claims far exceeded his inclination or his power to concede; and the discontent of the feudal party, though impotent for the present, was the more dangerous because sustained by brilliant talents and courage, and leavened by extraordinary political and social profligacy. M.R.

The century of faction and civil war which followed the death of Henry II. completely demoralised the upper classes of French society. It killed patriotism and public spirit; and generated a condition of political turpitude for which a parallel can scarcely be found in any other country or period of modern history. Its effect on private morality was equally disastrous. Scoffing impiety, which held nothing sacred among the living or among the dead, which profaned with impartial ribaldry the mysteries of the altar and the tomb; coarse debauchery, which ostentatiously violated the decencies of life; assassination by open violence and secret poisoning, were frightfully prevalent. The trade of the poisoner was associated with traffic in spells, and the detestable charlatanism of sorcery; blasphemous unbelief, and diabolical

cal superstition going hand-in-hand. Duelling, which Richelieu had sternly repressed, grew after his death into wholesale butchery. Chastity excited so much contempt, that women of strict virtue affected vice, in order to escape disagreeable criticism. The most brilliant epochs of French history have been generally characterised by sensuality, in which the magic garb of graceful refinement softened what was repulsive, and heightened every charm. The period of which we are treating was illustrated not only by the glory of arms, but by unsurpassed intellectual activity; but notwithstanding the decorum that reigned in her own household, the licentiousness of the Court of Anne of Austria was grossness itself. The noble examples of virtue that adorned the age only deepened the contrast presented by the general corruption. At a time of avowed scepticism pervading every sphere and every relation of life, of contempt of all laws, human and divine, there were many of both sexes, in positions most exposed to the contagion, who were governed by a spirit of faith, of noble self-sacrifice, and of chivalrous fidelity worthy of the ages of the Crusaders. It was the time of St. Vincent de Paul, who most of all men brought divine charity to hallow and console human misery; and nowhere did the words and works of the venerable teacher fall

upon a more fruitful soil than in the fashionable world of Paris. It was the time of the "divine Arthenice," and her circle of the Hotel Rambouillet, which for purity of tone, not less than splendid versatility of genius and all the charms of refined society, is without a rival in ancient or modern civilization. But it was still more the time of the poet Scarron and of Ninon de l'Enclos, whose saloons were temples of fashion, where wit and beauty, genius and Christian virtue itself, were prostituted in the service of atheism and obscenity.

Perhaps the most extraordinary sign and effect of the deterioration of manners was the easy toleration practised on points regarding which women, at least, are usually most sensitive; the throwing down of the social barriers which ordinarily separate women of good and of evil repute. The affectionate wife of the godless and debauched, though not ungenerous buffoon, the intimate companion of the shameless courtesan, was a young lady of spotless reputation, whom piety and strict principles, even more than her undoubted beauty and accomplishments, afterwards raised, under the name of Madame de Maintenon, to the most splendid throne of the world. Bussy Rabutin, who used his rare wit to season disgusting licentiousness and outrageous impiety, was the

cherished correspondent of Madame de Sevigné. Mademoiselle de Hautefort, whose whole life was sublime in its self-sacrificing virtue, was the bosom friend of Madame de Chevreuse. When the distinctions which women of unblemished character are accustomed to preserve with the greatest tenacity were so utterly confounded, it was not to be expected that their frail sisters should, in their conduct, pay morality the homage of outward decorum. An amusing instance of this absence of restraint, even in the highest circles of Parisian life, may serve as an illustration of the prevalent tone of morals. The coadjutor Archbishop of Paris, the celebrated Paul Gondy, afterwards Cardinal de Retz, neither whose remarkable ugliness nor sacred profession prevented his acquiring a dubious *éclat* for conquests over the fair, had been for some time notoriously the lover of the Princess of Gueminee. Unhappily for the lady's repose, Mademoiselle de Chevreuse, a younger, more captivating, and equally frail beauty, seduced the heart of the inconstant prelate. The fickleness of a gay Archbishop was not a circumstance so uncommon at the time as to provoke more than passing comment; and had the Princess dissembled her chagrin, and quietly consoled herself by taking another lover, or by making the most of those that remained to her,

her disappointment would have been speedily forgotten. But the perfidy of the coadjutor appears to have converted the dove-like tenderness of Madame de Gueminee into all the rage of the vulture. Meeting him soon after his desertion of her in a fashionable saloon, in a transport of jealous anger she flung a foot-stool at his head, to the intense amusement of a brilliant assemblage of his flock, who had the happiness to witness the scene.

Debauched, factious, rapacious, and impoverished, without principle and without fear, the feudal party only awaited an opportunity and a leader to plunge the realm into confusion in the hope of turning the public misfortunes to their own advantage.

Such an occasion as they sought could hardly fail to arise sooner or later from the well-founded and increasing discontent of the middle and lower classes, and from the inevitable mistakes which the Regent and Mazarin, both foreigners, both imperfectly acquainted with the institutions and character of the people they ruled, would commit with greater frequency and more fatal results, as their course became obscured by gathering troubles. The bourgeois and the peasants, whose industry fed a war of unprecedented severity and costliness, and the pomp of an extravagant Court,

were crushed beneath a weight of arbitrary taxation, which became more intolerable every day. France had for many years maintained four or five separate armies in the field, besides paying large subsidies to Sweden; and still the stubborn spirit of the House of Austria was unsubdued. Agriculture languished everywhere from the incessant drain upon the flower of the male population; large districts were waste and depopulated; manufactures and trade were slowly perishing under exorbitant imposts; and the commonalty execrated a war equally opposed to their national interests and their religious sympathies. The misery of the peasants was aggravated by the cruel rapacity of the Royal Intendants and the wealthy financiers, who farmed the public revenues and fattened on the general ruin. As Omer Talon, the eloquent Attorney General in the Parliament of Paris, said, in representing their condition to the Queen, "They only possessed their souls because a soul could not be sold by auction." Their groans and prayers, though loud and piteous, were listened to in silence. But though the cries of the helpless and famished people might be treated with indifference, the jealous policy which had led Mazarin to exclude from a share in the government the most able and experienced of the statesmen who had been formed by Richelieu, gradually

involved him in troubles, and raised up against him antagonisms which it was impossible for him to disregard.

On the dismissal of Chavigny and his father, Bouthillier, from their offices of Secretary of State, in the early days of the Regency, the Cardinal had filled the vacant places with two creatures of his own—Le Tellier, a Frenchman, a diligent and submissive subordinate, became Secretary for Foreign Relations, and Particelli, a Siamese adventurer, better known by his French title of the Chevalier d'Eméry, was placed over the finances. Few historical characters have been sketched by more skilful hands, few have come down to us portrayed in darker colours than the Chevalier d'Eméry. Able, courageous, and witty, but luxurious, dissolute, rapacious, cruel, faithless, and cynical, he made a jest of all moral obligations, and with reckless scorn openly mocked at the miseries aggravated by his corrupt administration. The proceeds of the existing taxes, however burdensome, were insufficient to satisfy the calls upon the royal exchequer. Instead of rendering these taxes more productive by removing the frightful abuses of collection, which impoverished at once the Treasury and the people, Eméry only thought of confusing inextricably the public accounts in order to hide his own peculations, and

perhaps those of Mazarin. As it was impossible to wring further supplies from the ruined peasants, he applied his mind to the discovery of some new process of extortion which might be brought to bear on the wealthy citizens of Paris. Searching among the ancient statutes of the realm, he disinterred from the dust of ages obsolete enactments, the revival of which promised to accomplish his ends. One, passed about a hundred years before, in the reign of Henry II., to prevent the extension of the city of Paris, and long fallen into disuse, placed whole quarters of the capital at the disposal of the Crown. Eméry took immediate steps to put it into execution. The inhabitants of some of the most wealthy regions of Paris received orders to demolish their houses, or to redeem them by payment of enormous fines. The rage and consternation of the Parisians knew no bounds. They appealed for protection to the Parliament, and this body remonstrated with the Regent against the act of confiscation contemplated by her ministers. Anne of Austria, unmindful of her repeated professions of deference to the advice of the magistrates, and of the cautious councils of Mazarin, repelled this interference with a haughty scorn which would have appeared harsh in Richelieu himself. But the tumults that shook the capital scared the Cardinal.

In conjunction with the patriotic Chief President of the High Court, he prevailed on the Regent to assent to a compromise. The obnoxious edict was withdrawn, and the Municipal Council of Paris voted a subsidy to replenish the exchequer.

This extraordinary supply, however, only enabled the Government to tide over the financial difficulties of the current year. The charges of the war, the profuse magnificence of the Court, the corruption of the administration, underwent no diminution as the exhaustion of the country increased; and Eméry, in order to meet the growing deficiencies of the revenue, again and again brought forward measures for the purpose of extracting money from the rich inhabitants of the capital. He still continued to take from the well-stored armoury of finance, which his researches had discovered, the rusted weapons of past legislation, because by reviving imposts which at some time had received the sanction of the Parliament of Paris, which, though dormant, had never been repealed, he hoped to avoid the opposition which might attend demands for the registration of new fiscal enactments. Some of his expedients, such as a forced grant from the notables of Paris, were simply extortion. Others, as the imposition of octroi duties, were in themselves defensible. But all were harshly and arbitrarily enforced, and all

were resisted with animosity, which deepened and widened every day.

At the beginning of these disputes one or other of the inferior courts of justice was most frequently the organ of the popular discontent, the High Court of Parliament giving a general support to the authority of the Regent. The office of First President of the High Court, an office pre-eminent in dignity and authority in the French judicial system, was at this time filled by perhaps the greatest magistrate that even Monarchical France, which ranked an unrivalled line of illustrious magistrates among its chief glories, ever produced. This was Mathieu Molé, a man of high wisdom, spotless integrity, unexampled courage, and iron will; a profound jurist, a master of grave, earnest eloquence, and of polished irony; moderate in his views, a firm supporter of the throne and the laws, and an enlightened advocate of popular rights. Molé—Conservative by habit of mind, and the jealous guardian of the privileges of his court, which the impatient spirits who had sway in the subordinate courts showed a disposition to invade—for some time firmly resisted the pressure, and repressed the pretensions of the inferior chambers. If the Regent had been wise, she would perhaps have found safety for her government in the dissensions of the magistracy. But,

incensed at the license of speech permitted in the Court of Inquests, she arrested some of its presidents and councillors, and flung them into prison. This despotic proceeding aroused against her the *esprit de corps*, which was perhaps the strongest sentiment among the French magistrates. The companies, united by common danger, forgot their disputes. Convoked by Molé, they unanimously protested against the Queen's arbitrary act, and demanded the release or trial of the prisoners. The haughty disdain and the fierce menaces with which the Regent repelled what she termed their presumption, only heightened their irritation. The state of the kingdom and the progress of events daily furnished them with new motives for strict union. The infancy of the King, the abasement of the feudal party and absence of its leading members, the abuse of the royal authority by the foreigners, who monopolised its functions, the spreading spirit of resistance, seemed to invite the Parliament of Paris to assume the position it had long coveted, that of constitutional organ of the national wants and wishes, controlling the legislative and financial powers of the Crown.

This aim had no positive sanction, though it might find some colourable pretexts, in the ancient usages of the realm. The Parliament was a judicial body, and the political functions which it

sought to exercise belonged of right to the States-General. But the States had not assembled since the early part of the century, and they met only at the pleasure of the Crown. The old feudal checks on the prerogative had been swept away. The High Court was distinguished above all existing public bodies in the kingdom by ancient dignity, disciplined vigour, legislative and judicial authority, and a higher and wider representative character. The disorders of the realm, and the confidence and veneration of the people, lent the motives and character of patriotism to its secret ambition. Baser motives, it is true—love of intrigue, self-interest, and private rancour—were at work among its members, as well as among the members of the subordinate courts. Disappointed politicians, who had no sympathy with its aims, secretly stimulated its action. Chavigny, Chateauneuf, and the Coadjutor De Retz, three men of first-rate ability, each of whom was equal to the greatest employments, and all of whom were jealously excluded by Mazarin from the administration, possessed numerous adherents in the Chambers, and silently promoted opposition to the Government for the purpose of overthrowing the Prime Minister. The Coadjutor especially exercised a large and an increasing influence amongst the younger and more factious members. But

the majority of the High Court and the most respected magistrates steadily followed the lead of their First President, who, even when reluctantly lending his sanction to perilous and irregular steps, was swayed by a paramount sense of public duty; whose upright and steadfast mind was equally proof against seductions of popular applause or the terrors of popular fury, and the violence or blandishments of the Court.

The dangers that threatened the Government from the opposition of the Parliament of Paris, trifling at first, but more menacing every year, were greatly aggravated by the deficiencies and the errors of Cardinal Mazarin. The business of foreign relations, which he retained under his own immediate control, and for which he possessed unrivalled qualifications, was conducted with admirable skill and vigour. But his consciousness of the peculiar difficulties of his position as Prime Minister, working upon a temper not naturally bold, rendered the internal policy of the Government feeble and undignified. His knowledge of the laws, the customs, the institutions, and even the language of the kingdom, was at this time extremely imperfect. He had no stand-point in the State except the favour of the Regent. His love of power had deprived him of the assistance of any French statesman on whose capacity, experience,

and sincerity he could rest with confidence. Like a blind man groping along a strange and difficult path, a perpetual fear of incurring some unknown peril infected his mind with a fatal irresolution as to the steps he should pursue. Haunted by chimerical terrors, he was in a great measure unaware of the real dangers that encompassed him. His favourite political maxim, that selfishness in its narrowest sense is the universal motive of human actions, was a feeble safe-guard against the rising passions of a stormy age. And in his partiality for finesse, he could not even allow this cardinal principle of his system free play. Reluctant to part with a talisman to which he ascribed such potent influence, he kept an object of desire dangling before the eyes of some opponent whom he purposed to conciliate until, at length, disappointment produced incurable irritation. His policy was to avoid present dangers and to pave the way for the action of his trusted ally, Time, by cautious steering and temporising expedients.

The haughty Austrian blood of the Regent suggested to her a very different line of proceeding. She remembered in what abject submission the Parliament of Paris had cowered before Richelieu; how it had seen Mary of Medicis, the Princes of the Blood, and the greatest nobles of the realm,

imprisoned, exiled, condemned to death by irregular special commissions, without daring to utter a protest. And she took no pains to conceal her anger and contempt at the presumption which now assailed the throne with remonstrances on behalf of a few turbulent councillors, mere pitiful *canaille*. Had she followed the promptings of her own judgment while the imperious spirit of the late Cardinal still informed the administration and awed the realm, she might probably have crushed opposition in the bud. But she constantly allowed herself to be swayed from her convictions of the necessity of ruling with a strong hand by the timorous counsels of her minister. The result was a halting and uncertain policy, the most dangerous of any. The scornful words and the violent acts of the Queen, explained away in sugared phrases by the Cardinal, and followed by ungracious concessions, encouraged and inflamed the opposition of the magistrates and the citizens, and exposed the Government to contempt.

The animosity with which the Parisians regarded him was intensified by singular want of foresight on the part of Mazarin, who, laying aside, as his position became more secure, the prudence that had governed the beginning of his career, insulted the public distress by displaying in magnificent buildings, and in ostentatious

luxury, the enormous wealth he had already amassed. At the time of the downfall of the Importants, Anne of Austria, anxious to escape from the sad memories and the discomforts of the Louvre, had removed her Court to the splendid and spacious palace which Richelieu had built and had bequeathed to his sovereign. The recent attempt on his life, and her constant need of his guidance in affairs of State, did not perhaps permit her to see in its full extent the imprudence she committed in assigning her favourite a suite of apartments adjoining her own. The Cardinal, safely installed in the Palais Royal, and with uncontrolled command of the public revenue, indulged without restraint his sumptuous and refined tastes. The most renowned artists of Italy, architects, painters, musicians, were invited to embellish and delight the French capital. The art collections of his native land, an almost inexhaustible and as yet unspoiled treasury of genius, were ransacked to satisfy the luxurious wants of a minister, who united faultless judgment to boundless resources. Statues, pictures, cabinets, vases, the most sublime and exquisite achievements of Italian masters, arriving day after day at the Palais Royal, excited the wonder and envy of the Parisians. Contiguous to, and as if in rivalry of Richelieu's noble pile, there soon arose, under the skilful

hand of the great French architect, Mansard, from the midst of vast and beautiful gardens, a fitting home for so many artistic gems; the superb proportions of the Palais Mazarin, rich externally in various hues of sculptured marble, and decorated within by the brilliant pencils of the greatest painters of the time. The prodigious sums squandered in operatic entertainments, hitherto unknown in France, to which the Cardinal invited the Court, excited loud murmurs of public indignation. The unwise ostentation which paraded before all eyes the colossal private fortune that grew apace with the beggary of the Treasury, the wretchedness of the people, and the needs of the State, was sure to provoke the Nemesis that waits upon insolent prosperity. Three young damsels, the first migration of the celebrated nieces of Mazarin, arriving from Rome in the middle of 1647, to be educated under the care of Anne of Austria, afforded new point to the furious tirades of the Parisians. Rhyming lampoons—of which the Mazarinades by the Abbé Scarron were the most famous—witty, obscene, audacious, and truculent, in which the Regent, Mazarin, and the Mazarinettes, aspersed with the grossest license, were held up to public hatred and contempt, began to be chaunted in the streets and under the windows of the palace. The placable and subtle

Cardinal, with his tortuous policy and his gentle expedients, found that, without avoiding the fierce enmities that had been aroused by the vigorous despotism of his predecessor, he had made himself the object of popular scorn.

It was in this unfavourable state of public opinion that the Government felt itself compelled by the exigences of its position to send for registration to the Parliament of Paris new financial decrees, necessary in order to provide for the expenditure of the year 1648. Every year the task of Eméry had become more difficult and more odious. The methods in which he could exercise his perverted ingenuity diminished through an inevitable process of exhaustion, as the public exasperation grew more vehement. But it seemed to the Queen and Mazarin, that the peculiar constitution of the French Magistracy now gave them a fortunate advantage over the Parliament, which afforded effectual means at once of repression and of extortion. The period of nine years, during which the Magistrates, through the payment of the Paulette, possessed an absolute property in their offices, expired with the year 1647. The renewal of the lease, though rendered almost a matter of form by the custom of fifty years, was an act of the Sovereign's favour. The Government preserved an ominous silence on the subject. As an additional safeguard against

the dreaded opposition of the High Court, it was determined that the financial edicts should be secretly prepared in the Council of State, and presented for registration in a Bed of Justice.

The holding of a Bed of Justice for the purpose of suppressing unwelcome discussion was the most odious and absolute exercise of the royal prerogative. The King went in state to the Palace of Justice, and peremptorily ordered his edict, of which only the title was read out, to be entered on the journals in his presence. The theory on which this arbitrary stretch of authority rested, was that the wisdom and piety inherent in Kings of France shaped even their most apparently unjust decisions, by suggesting to them motives of high and beneficent policy inscrutable to less gifted mortals. But the special attribute of divinely enlightened judgment in the affairs of State, with whatever colour of probability it might be credited to a Saint Louis, or even to an ordinary monarch of mature understanding, could hardly be seriously predicated by the most devoted loyalty of a child of nine years. The boy-king performed his part, and departed amidst the respectful silence of the Parliament. When it was found that the new edicts, besides other measures of spoliation, created twelve additional offices of Masters of Requests, exposed for sale in the ordinary way,

and greatly diminishing the value of those already existing, the uproar in the Court of Requests was loud and angry. An intimation from the Government that the privilege of the Paulette would be granted to the members of the inferior Chambers, the exception in favour of the High Court being one of Mazarin's over-subtle strokes of finesse, only on the payment of four years' income of their appointments into the Exchequer, rendered the tumult general. The Parliament, true to its order, refused to separate its interests from those of the other Courts, and in defiance of the Regent's menaces, annulled the objectionable clauses of the Royal edict. Anne of Austria, furious at this unprecedented contempt of the Sovereign's own act, retracted her concessions in regard to the Paulette, arrested several of the more obnoxious Councillors, and threatened the High Court with summary vengeance. But private wrongs acted as a powerful incentive to patriotic zeal. The Parliament, undaunted, threw down the gauge of battle by passing the celebrated Decree of Union of the 13th of May, 1648, which convoked all the Chambers in the Hall of St. Louis to deliberate for the reformation of the realm.

This bold measure struck the Cardinal with dismay. By his instructions, the Chancellor

Seguier sent a conciliatory message to the Palace of Justice. "Tell the Chancellor," replied Molé, "that we shall no longer permit our private interests to remain at the mercy of a Controller General, or trust the administration of the realm to a foreigner." The Regent was now beside herself with amazement and anger. The cautious counsels of her minister began, too late, to fill her with distrust. She flung four more of the magistrates into the Bastille; and she sent Guinégaud, Under Secretary of State, to the Palace of Justice with an order in Council cancelling the Decree of Union, and directing that it should be torn in his presence from the Parliamentary Register and replaced by the decree of cassation. Guinégaud, arriving with an armed escort, was received by the excited magistrates with a running fire of taunts and revilings, and compelled to retreat in confusion without having accomplished his mission. Then the Regent, incensed to the last degree, commanded Molé and his colleagues to appear on the morrow at the Palais Royal and deliver up the leaf of their Register containing the obnoxious decree. The Parliament, after a sharp debate, resolved to obey the Queen's summons to the Palace; but their decision on the question of surrendering the coveted leaf was expressed in the energetic words of the First President,

"*Nec possumus, nec debemus.*" On the following day the Regent, with the young King by her side, surrounded by the great officers of the Crown, and by an unusual parade of military force, ascended her throne in the State apartments of the Palais Royal to receive the submission of the Parliament. The courtiers, not doubting the result, exulted with quiet malice over the approaching spectacle of humiliation. But when Molé, conspicuous by his magnificent head and his long white beard, announced the decision of the Chamber, this serene placidity was torn by conflicting emotions. The most violent counsels were discussed, but the prudent advice of Mazarin, which found a secret echo in the hearts of many of the loudest declaimers, prevailed. The magistrates were warned of the chastisement they would incur by further contumacy in a solemn lecture from the Chancellor, which the Queen greatly enlivened by fitful explosions of uncontrollable passion, and were then permitted to depart in safety. They proceeded without delay to carry out the Decree of Union by holding the first meeting of all the Chambers in the Hall of St. Louis.

It is necessary to bear in mind the principles and the characters of the Regent and Cardinal Mazarin in order to appreciate the disturbed, yet dissimilar feelings with which they received the

news of this deliberate act of defiance. Both of them were unable to understand the meaning of popular rights. In the eyes of both absolute monarchy was the only just and legitimate form of Government, and opposition in any shape, or upon any pretext, was rebellion. But the mind of Anne of Austria, incapable of fear, and filled with contempt for the plebeian magistrates, was occupied only with thoughts of vengeance; while the Cardinal was only too keenly alive to the perils of the situation. "God grant me patience," Anne would exclaim; "the Cardinal is too easy; he will ruin everything by always sparing and propitiating his enemies." "You, madame," Mazarin would retort, "are like a young recruit; you fight, but you know not your danger." In fact, the Parliament occupied a position of great advantage. They were strong in the cordial sympathy of the provincial parliaments, in the universal discontent, and in the enthusiastic support of Paris. The great nobles alienated from the Government beheld its difficulties with satisfaction. Orleans, feeble and fond of popularity, could not be relied on. In Condé, in whom Anne of Austria recognised a spirit congenial to her own, lay, notwithstanding his continual bickerings with Mazarin, her chief dependence. But the Prince, with ill-appointed and mutinous

troops, had his hands full on the Flemish frontier. The taxes for the year could not be levied. The treasury was empty. Large arrears of pay were due to the armies and to the officers of the Court. The Queen had to pledge her jewels and to borrow money from the Dowager Princess of Condé, in order to defray the current expenses of her household, and to pay the Royal Guards, the only military force she could oppose to an outbreak of the capital.

Turning, in her distress, to a minister who had administered with ability the arbitrary system of Richelieu, and fallen from power through his perfidy for her, which she had fitly repaid by ingratitude, the Regent summoned Chateauneuf from his retreat at Montrouge, and asked his assistance. But the wily old ex-keeper, finding that he was expected to take the chestnuts out of the fire for Mazarin, declined the responsibility, and counselled concessions. She then secretly invited Condé to Paris to save the Crown. The Prince, who had left his army in presence of the superior force of the Archduke Leopold, could only advise her to temporise until the conclusion of the campaign. Sick at heart, and having no further resource, she accepted the Decree of Union.

The committee appointed by the United Cham-

bers, of which Molé was chairman, distrusting the Regent's sincerity, lost no time in framing and submitting for her sanction a constitution of twenty-seven articles. One article abolished the office of Royal Intendant, and diminished the impost called "la taille," which pressed so heavily on the peasants. A second prohibited, under penalty of death, the levying of new taxes, except such as might be imposed by edicts registered after full discussion and free consent, by the Parliament of Paris. A third article restrained the Crown from creating new judicial or financial offices without the consent of the Parliament. By a fourth it was provided that no Frenchman should remain in prison longer than twenty-four hours without being taken before his legal judges—a provision equivalent to the Habeas Corpus Act, passed at a later period in England. These were the more important points of this famous constitution. It will be seen that it not only swept away a financial system, fertile in fraud, oppression, and injustice, but that it lopped away the most monstrous abuses of the royal prerogative; the power of compelling decrees to be registered without examination in Beds of Justice, and the power of arbitrarily arresting any subject, however blameless, and detaining him in prison during the King's pleasure.

The reforms embodied in the new constitution were resisted by the Government with the greatest pertinacity. The suppression of the Royal Intendants touched it, to borrow the words of the Coadjutor De Retz, "in the very apple of the eye." These functionaries, who farmed the collection of the taxes, covenanted to pay a fixed sum into the Treasury, and wrung immense profits from the famine-stricken people. They were in the habit of advancing the stipulated amount at the beginning of each year. The Government was already indebted to them for large loans which it had not the means of repaying, and was in the direst need of additional advances. But the magistrates were not to be moved by argument or expostulation, and the Intendants fell. Mazarin, by an unworthy breach of faith, accepted with alacrity the proposal of the incensed Parliament to relieve the State by cancelling its liabilities to the discarded financiers, who were branded as public robbers. In order further to appease popular hatred, Eméry was dismissed from the post of Controller General, and exiled from Paris.

The Regent also, after long demur, and in a manner that left no doubt of the insincerity of the concession, partially allowed the articles upon taxation, and freedom of discussion and suffrage. But it was impossible to obtain her assent to the

provision against arbitrary imprisonment. She declared she was ready to brave every peril rather than suffer the prerogative to be robbed of its brightest jewel. In violation of her recent pledges, she again brought the young King to the Palace of Justice to command the registration of the accepted articles in a mutilated form, which destroyed their efficacy; and to prohibit the further meetings of the United Chambers in the Hall of St. Louis. At the same time, with the view of rendering this arbitrary proceeding palatable, the privileges of the Paulette were renewed unconditionally for another period. But the Parliament, justly indignant, treated the royal edict with contempt; and matters would have come to a crisis had not the Duke of Orleans, whose gracious manners and popular bearing during the late discussions, in which he frequently represented the Crown, won him universal favour, been induced by Mazarin to implore a short adjournment of the political debates in the Hall of St. Louis, as a mark of regard towards himself.

It was perfectly clear, however, to both sides that no compromise was possible. Only a decisive victory could end the conflict. The Regent regarding the unexpected assault of the Parliament upon the undoubted, though tyrannical prerogatives of the Crown as flagrant treason, and naturally resenting

the advantage it had taken of the embarrassments of the Government in order to usurp a character and powers foreign to its constitution and its functions, eagerly expected an opportunity of striking a blow which might vindicate the royal authority and quell for ever such insolent pretensions. On the other hand, Molé and his colleagues, moved by patriotic indignation at seeing the public miseries aggravated by the misrule of foreign adventurers, were determined to destroy for ever the abuses of authority that scourged the country; to pursue their present advantage to the utmost, in order to wring from the Regent a full and formal concession of all their demands. And it must be admitted that their proceedings, though irregular, were fully justified by the circumstances of the time. The fall of the great feudal houses had removed the chief restraint upon the authority of the King. It was no longer in the power of any one order of the State to compel the Sovereign to call together the States General; and a union of the orders for that purpose, separated as the nobles and the higher clergy were from the Third Estate, by peculiar privileges and interests, and by the contempt of dominant race, could only be brought about by some overwhelming crisis of public affairs. The superior dignity and consideration it enjoyed in the State, the impartial

position it held as the chief guardian and exponent of the laws, its ancient traditions as the courageous defender of the rights of the subject, the crying evils of misgovernment, and, above all, the loud call of public opinion, had imposed on the Parliament the lofty and perilous duty of finding a remedy for the disorders of the kingdom. Guided hitherto by a few wise, resolute, and high-principled statesmen, the propositions of reform it had submitted were equitable and moderate, laying the foundations of secure and well-ordered freedom, without unnecessarily trenching on the power and dignity of the Crown. The Parliamentary leaders saw that Anne of Austria and her minister were not to be trusted. They discerned, too, with patriotic insight, what the astute Cardinal and his imperious mistress could not see in their imperfect acquaintance with the real condition of France, and perhaps would not see if they could, that the political atmosphere was full of the signs and portents of an approaching convulsion. The country had gradually drifted into that unhappy condition in which change appears to all classes to mean improvement. The nobles ardently desired a state of confusion which would promote their own selfish aims. The bourgeois class, incensed by misgovernment, and stirred by the sound of the revolutionary tempest that had

swept over England, were ripe for revolt. The peasantry having tasted the bitterest dregs of misery had nothing further to fear. Only prompt and ample concessions on the part of the Crown could now avert from the kingdom the calamities of civil war.

It is at such periods of general discontent that men of bold, unscrupulous genius appear prominently on the political stage, and, rousing the passions of a nation into tumult, are borne to greatness on the mighty wave of popular opinion. There was not now wanting a man of this stamp in France, one of the most skilful and accomplished artificers of faction that the world had ever seen; a powerful but sombre spirit, whose delight it was to ride on the whirlwind and play with the lightnings of political convulsion, to rule in fierce triumph the wild forces of anarchy; who, to serve his own ambition, collecting all the heterogeneous and discordant elements of disaffection in France, marshalled them against the Government in uncongenial association under the celebrated name of the Fronde. This was Paul Gondi, afterwards Archbishop of Paris and Cardinal de Retz. Gondi was born of the ducal house of De Retz, which derived its origin from a Florentine banker, who had come to France in the train of Catherine of Medicis, and whose family

had been enriched and raised to the highest rank of French nobility by the partial favour of Charles IX. Nature had formed him for the profession of arms; but, being a younger son, family interests compelled him to enter the Church. During the latter part of Richelieu's life, the little Abbé de Retz became notorious for his amours, his duels, and his active participation in plots for the assassination or overthrow of the minister. The Cardinal, although he seems to have regarded the turbulent priest with a feeling of misgiving similar to that which had sharpened Sulla's aversion for Julius Cæsar, to whose early character and career those of De Retz bore a striking resemblance, dealt leniently with him; and, after the death of Louis XIII., to whom he was odious, the young Abbé was appointed by Anne of Austria Coadjutor to his uncle, the Archbishop of Paris. This dignity, which secured to him the reversion of the Metropolitan See, and gave him a recognised position in the State, was only the first step in the ladder of his ambition. He aspired to tread in the footsteps of Richelieu—to become Cardinal and Prime Minister of France. Pursuing this object, he assiduously cultivated the favour of the Regent, and sought to fling over her the dangerous spells of his lively wit and his brilliant fancy, until Mazarin, discerning

a dangerous rival, frustrated his schemes by skillfully throwing an air of ridicule around the pretensions of the gay but ill-favoured prelate. He then changed his tactics. Seeing clearly that Mazarin's hold upon the mind and heart of Anne of Austria was not to be shaken, and that his own way to greatness lay over the ruined fortunes of the subtle Italian, he set himself to raise such troubles in the kingdom, and to acquire for himself such a control over them, as would drive his antagonist from the helm, and render his own political services indispensable. His splendid eloquence, which filled to overflowing the Cathedral of Notre Dame, his well-simulated zeal for religion and for the interests of his diocese, his unremitting ministrations among the poor of his flock, his profuse liberalities—to supply which he borrowed enormous sums—won for him complete sway over his clergy, and over the citizens and the populace of the capital. Endowed with extraordinary genius, devoured by restless ambition, unfettered by moral restraints, possessing in an unrivalled degree the talents of a demagogue—the dangerous faculty of swaying multitudes, and moulding their fickle passions to his own purposes—sustained by a resolute audacity and a readiness of resource equal to every emergency, he secretly bent all the great powers of his mind,

and used all the expedients of his art, to kindle, and, at the same time, rule in his own interests the nascent spirit of disaffection. Proceeding with wary steps, he preserved amicable relations with the Queen and the Prime Minister. He kept up confidential communications with Condé, with the discontented nobles, with Madame de Chevreuse in exile, with the most violent and therefore most popular members of the Chambers, whom he moved at will through the ascendancy of a superior mind, and his influence over the meaner citizens; sounding the thoughts of all, and making the designs of each subservient to his own. Besides the leaders of Parisian democracy and the factious councillors with whom he held carefully-concealed conferences at the Archbishop's residence, he maintained intimate relations with plotters of a more dangerous character. Such were Fontrailles, Montresor, St. Ibal, men of infamous lives and desperate fortunes, the inferior agents in all the schemes for the assassination of Richelieu, whose whole existence had been a dark conspiracy against the public welfare. Nobles themselves, these men gave the Coadjutor command over numbers of the inferior nobility, needy and debauched adventurers, who, for the slightest hope of personal advantage, were ready to throw themselves into any enterprise, no matter

how perilous or criminal. A confirmed libertine, and though one of the ugliest and most ungraceful men in France, enjoying the favours of the most celebrated beauties of the time, De Retz had the art of making his mistresses zealous agents in his schemes. At the same time the most devout women in Paris, charmed by his fervid preaching, and his ostentatious charities, trumpeted his virtues, everywhere, with credulous enthusiasm. And yet, notwithstanding his many vices and his reckless selfishness, De Retz would probably have made one of the most admirable ministers France ever possessed. His mind had been enlightened and enlarged by deep study of the great writers of antiquity, whom he often rivalled in the elevation of his thoughts, and the elegance of his style. He was a profound observer of the men and the events of his own time, and he was probably the only French statesman, not of plebeian blood, who knew the value of popular rights, and had a genuine sympathy with rational freedom. His ambition, though unscrupulous, was not altogether ignoble. He loved France; he believed that he was the most capable to guide her destinies, and he aspired to link his name with her greatness. Had he succeeded in grasping firmly the helm of affairs, like Julius Cæsar, the great model upon whom he

formed his life, he would perhaps have blinded the world to the crimes and follies of his youth by the splendour of his later career.

The Duke of Bouillon, a political leader of the highest rank, who played a part only second in importance to that of De Retz in the drama of the Fronde, was by birth a sovereign prince, and one of the greatest nobles of France; and by nature a remarkable man in an age fertile in extraordinary characters. His father, Henri de la Tour d'Auvergne, Viscount of Turenne, chief of a powerful and ancient family in the South of France, and one of the most valiant captains of Henry of Navarre, had obtained from his sovereign in recompense for his services the hand of Charlotte de la Marck, heiress of the Duchy of Bouillon, and of the independent principality of Sedan. His wife dying without issue, he married again, the sister of Prince Maurice of Nassau, who, after the death of the Duke of Parma, was esteemed the greatest general of his age. From this illustrious alliance sprang two sons, the subject of this sketch, and his still more famous brother, Marshal Turenne. The youth of Bouillon had been cradled in intrigue, and his powerful intellect had been precociously matured by the stimulating atmosphere of political strife in which the mighty spirit of Richelieu lived and ruled. An aristocrat

of the purest type, and a Huguenot chief, there was scarcely a conspiracy against the great minister in which Bouillon had not borne a principal part; but his almost impregnable fortress of Sedan, conveniently situated on the confines of the French and Spanish dominions, afforded him a secure refuge in reverse. He was at length arrested at the head of his troops when in command of a French army in Italy, for complicity in the treason of Cinq-Mars, and was allowed by Richelieu, at the earnest intercession of the Prince of Orange, to ransom his life by ceding Sedan to the French Crown. Since the period of this compulsory sacrifice, all his energies had been vainly directed to recover his forfeited territory, or obtain an equivalent grant of lands or money. Long cozened by Mazarin with illusory hopes, self-interest and resentment urged him to espouse the popular cause. Few men of his time were so highly gifted by nature with the qualities that achieve success in a turbulent age. He was cool, skilful, and far-seeing. He had at command an unstudied yet artful eloquence, equally potent to convince a council of statesmen or to sway a popular assembly. His abilities for civil affairs were of the first order; his military talents were little inferior to those of his illustrious brother. At a subsequent period of his life, during the

exile of Cardinal Mazarin from France, he became the chief adviser of the Regent, and his premature death relieved the Cardinal of a most formidable rival. Although his general policy was deeply leavened by the selfishness that characterised his age and his order, he displayed on many occasions noble and generous qualities which do not always survive in a mind, no matter how fine and chivalrous its original feelings, which from infancy has breathed the tainted air, and been nurtured amidst the seething passions of a corrupt and factious era.

The gallant and accomplished Prince of Marsillac, better known by his later title of Duke of la Rochefoucault, was another great noble who played a brilliant part in the Fronde, of which he has left us such a vivid picture in his "Memoirs." Although yet young, he had been the ablest of the party styled the "Importants," with the exception of Chateaufort. But the cynical temper and the fastidious hauteur already observed in the future author of "The Maxims" detracted from his qualifications as a political leader. At the time of the downfall of his party he had deliberately forfeited the distinguished favour of Anne of Austria, due to him for chivalrous devotion at a season of great peril, and splendid prospects of employment, rather than be-

tray his principles or desert his old friend Madame de Chevreuse. He occasionally appeared at Court after his partial disgrace, but was treated by the Regent with coldness and neglect; and he amused the leisure to which her ingratitude condemned him by literary pursuits, and by noting keenly the course of events. Like Bouillon, la Rochefoucault knew nothing of the lofty and Catholic sentiment of patriotism that animated Molé. A proud descendant of the Frankish conquerors, the great majority of the nations were only to him the descendants of the vanquished Gauls; Frenchmen, indeed, by name, but of an alien and inferior race, doomed to perpetual exclusion from high political or military trust, to wear for ever the badges of subjection. Obedience to the King, within the limits imposed by fidelity to his order and to his friends, was his rule of public duty. Following this narrow law of political conduct, he had generously rejected the splendid offers of Richelieu through friendship for Anne of Austria, and those of Anne of Austria through friendship for Madame de Chevreuse. His mortal foe, De Retz, accuses him of habitual deceit, masked by a show of candour; and he himself acknowledges that he used the affection of the beautiful Madame de Longueville to further his political designs. But no man of his party who took part in the troubles of the

time was governed by a higher sense of honour, or was less swayed by selfish devotion to purely personal ends. His birth, his principles, his disposition, should have made him the prop and ornament of the throne; in the strange confusion of the political world his brilliant qualities and even his loyal character made him a tower of strength to faction.

Gaston, Duke of Orleans, occupies an unenviable eminence among those public men, without strength or dignity of character, upon whom the unhappy accident of birth or circumstance thrusts a greatness that only serves to expose, in the strongest light, failings to which the pitiless finger of history directs the everlasting contempt of mankind. He was the only brother of Louis XIII., and had been till near the close of that sickly and unpopular monarch's reign heir presumptive to the French Crown. The spoiled darling of his mother, Mary of Medicis, the hope of France in her impatient writhings under an iron despotism, and possessing, in a considerable degree, the external graces and the superficial accomplishments which adorn a Court, and win popular applause, a very moderate share of political virtue and capacity would have ensured to him the second place in the kingdom in influence as well as in rank. But no advantages of fortune,

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no indulgent partiality of his countrymen, could supply an utter absence of sterling worth, or shield a nature so frivolous from just discredit. Throughout his life, he appears to have been incapable of forming an independent resolution, or of consistently adhering to any line of conduct, no matter how obviously conducive to his own interests, which the influence of a stronger mind had forced him to adopt. Morally, perhaps physically, a coward, his notorious falseness resulted from excessive timidity rather than from natural depravity. He was cursed with a restless, though impotent, love of faction, without being gifted with the qualities which render faction formidable. The fatuity with which he suffered himself to be hurried into rash and criminal enterprises was on a par with the vacillation which in the hour of action paralysed his faculties and wrecked the efforts of his friends, and with the abject meanness by which he avoided the consequences of his folly. Ever the dupe of his own egregious vanity, ever shamelessly servile to the caprices or guilty ambition of some designing favourite, whom he as shamelessly betrayed at the approach of danger, he had lent to every conspiracy against his brother's authority the sanction of his support, and had invariably sacrificed his accomplices to his own safety. He abandoned

his mother, and the gallant nobles who were ever but too ready to respond to his call, to the vengeance of Richelieu, with the selfish indifference of a mind for which secure infamy alone had no terrors. Louis XIII. extended to him to the last an indulgent forbearance, which was probably prompted as much by disdain as by natural partiality; but no ties of affection, gratitude, or honour could bind his fickle disposition. He only ceased to trouble the State when he had sunk so low in public esteem as to be no longer able to inspire trust, and when the strong arm of Richelieu had struck down all whose support could lend importance to his opposition. After the annulling of his brother's will had shorn his office of Lieutenant General of the kingdom of nearly all its independent powers, Orleans remained in the condition of a political cypher, until the breaking out of new dissensions in the State afforded fresh scope to his feverish incapacity. It then appeared that years, without bringing him wisdom, had confirmed and given a ludicrous development to his constitutional timidity. In every difficulty he shrank from committing himself to a definite line of conduct, as a child shrinks from the goblin terrors with which its fancy peoples a darkened chamber; and he resorted to a somewhat similar mode of escape, it being his habit, when importuned for a decision, to

bury himself for days together in bed, until the danger had passed away. Yet, notwithstanding an impotence and a craven selfishness of character, which could not fail to provoke scorn, Gaston, throughout the greater part of his life, was eminently popular. His manners, gracious and affable, captivated the multitude. His restless craving after importance, combined with an uneasy consciousness of real insignificance, inclined him to assume an air of patronage towards the popular party; and he was gifted with a natural flow of eloquence, which, when not checked by unworthy fears, charmed the turbulent passions of a revolutionary age. His talents and his defects, his royal birth and his high office, to which the course of events might restore all its original authority, rendered him a formidable, though treacherous tool for the hands of an able demagogue.

The advantages of a close union with Orleans did not escape De Retz, when he had relinquished the hope of supplanting Mazarin in the Regent's favour. Before long the versatile genius and the resolute will of the accomplished prelate had secretly acquired a hold, unprecedented in strength and duration, on the fickle mind of the Lieutenant General; an ascendancy fraught with grave political consequences.

The extraordinary escape of the Duke of

Beaufort from the high donjon keep of the Castle of Vincennes set loose another antagonist of the Government, whose opposition appears to have been anticipated by the Cardinal with nervous apprehension. The mental calibre of Beaufort was not by any means powerful; but alone of the House of Vendôme he had inherited the enterprising spirit and the popular manners of his grandfather, Henry IV. He was the hero of the populace, and especially of the fishwomen of Paris, and a rigorous imprisonment of five years had exasperated, to the last degree, his old animosity against Mazarin. Some remains of former partiality for her handsome young champion, some feeling of remorse for the terrible fate which had overtaken his headstrong folly, led the Regent to receive the intelligence of his flight with equanimity. She resisted the pressing advice of her minister to have him pursued to his father's chateau of Anet, whither he had retired. Beaufort, finding himself unmolested in his retreat, opened communications with his old confederates and with De Retz, impatient for any enterprise which promised him the excitement of bold action and revenge.

In a society so pregnant with elements of discord, and containing men so able and so willing to set them in a blaze, a spark was sufficient to

cause a dangerous conflagration. A stretch of authority, rash and ill-timed, but by no means novel, on the part of the Regent, lit up the civil war of the Fronde; so called in sarcastic allusion to the conflicts waged with slings and stones by the boys of Paris outside the city walls. During the short suspension of political discussions at the Palace of Justice, which had been conceded with great reluctance to the earnest solicitations of the Duke of Orleans, the Duke of Chatillon arrived in Paris, bringing intelligence of Condé's great victory at Lens. The Queen was transported with joy, not so much on account of the defeat of the Spaniards, as because she thought that the moment had arrived for quelling the opposition of the magistracy by a decisive blow. Contrary to the opinion of Mazarin, who wished to await the expected coming of the Prince with a strong military force, she determined, in her fierce impatience, to brook no further delay in making some of the more factious presidents and councillors belonging to the extreme party of the Chambers, who shaped their proceedings in avowed emulation of the Parliamentary leaders in England, feel the weight of her anger. The most obnoxious of these was an old councillor named Broussel, poor, honest, of slender capacity, and Republican opinions, whose violent harangues and simple life

attracted the love and admiration of the lowest class of citizens. These revered him as a model of patriotic virtue, and styled him their father. The foolish old man, when spouting sedition, was merely the mouth-piece of the Coadjutor. As often as it suited the policy of the scheming prelate to increase or give a new direction to the agitation of the public mind, he secretly inspired Broussel with the ideas he wished to have ventilated in the Palace of Justice.

The 26th of August, the day appointed for a religious service at Notre Dame, in public thanksgiving for the success of the French arms, was fixed upon in private conclave at the Palais Royal for the *coup d'état*. The King and the Regent, attended by the whole Court, proceeded in state to the Cathedral, the regiments of Guards lined the way, and were massed at convenient points along the route. The Parliament, the municipal authorities, and the other civil or ecclesiastical corporations of the capital were present in their robes of ceremony. The Coadjutor, assisted by a crowd of prelates blazing in the splendour of religious pomp, ministered at the altar, chaunted the *Te Deum*, and consecrated the captured standards; and at the conclusion of the service the royal *cortège* returned quietly to the Palace. So well had the design of the Regent been cloaked by her

placid serenity, and by the benevolent professions of the Cardinal, that even the lynx-eyed vigilance of the Coadjutor was lulled to rest. The first circumstance that awakened suspicion was the unusual spectacle of Comminges, Lieutenant of the Swiss Guards, whose duty it was to precede his sovereign, lingering in the church after the King's departure. The ominous news was whispered from bench to bench. A panic seized the ranks of the Parliament. They rushed forth pell-mell through all the doors, and in the struggle and confusion the magistrates, marked out for the vengeance of the Government, effected their escape, with the exception of the President Blancmesnil, who was hurried off to Vincennes. Comminges then went, preceded by a coach and a strong escort, in search of Broussel, who lived in a mean house, in a narrow squalid street by the river. The old councillor had absented himself from the religious ceremony, and was found in his dressing-gown and slippers at dinner with his family. Terror at the sight of the King's Lieutenant deprived him of speech or motion, and he was dragged off by Comminges, somewhat unceremoniously, and flung into the coach. But in the meantime an old female domestic had rushed, with shrieks and wild gestures, to an open window, and filled the air with her cries, "To the rescue

of Broussel, the Father of the People." The bargemen from the neighbouring wharves, and the whole ragged population, male and female, of the dingy alleys which crowded the quarter, roused by her appeals, swarmed forth in fury, armed with every weapon their rage could find. Stones, brickbats, and domestic utensils rained upon the escort. The carriage was smashed to pieces; but after a series of desperate combats, Comminges, by the timely succour of a fresh body of guards, was enabled to carry off his prisoner to St. Germain.

The blow by which the Regent hoped to crush sedition in the Chambers had now fallen, though with only partial success; but the consequences of this act of violence were far different from what she had anticipated. In her blind anger she saw not, and recked not, how thoroughly the whole body of society was quickened by the restless discontent which tossed and frothed on the surface; that the blatant demagogues whom she had seized were but puppets moved by the secret agency of skilful hands. Hardly had she tasted its delights when she was rudely awakened from her dream of vengeance by the armed hand of revolt. In an incredibly short time all Paris was in arms. Insurrection bristled in every street, and the tide of the living sea, forcing its impetuous way over

the feeble obstacles that only excited its rage, choked up all the avenues of the Palais Royal. De Retz, taken completely by surprise, and desirous of keeping on good terms with the Regent, set out on hearing of the commotion, without even taking time to put off his episcopal vestments, from the Cathedral to the Palace. On the Pont Neuf he saw Marshal la Meilleraie with a handful of mounted guards beset by an angry mob, led on by Broussel's terrible old woman servant, and in imminent peril of being flung over the battlements into the river. The Marshal, in self-defence, had shot a porter, and the bleeding body excited the fury of the porter's comrades. The appearance of the Coadjutor somewhat calmed the tumult. Borne, amidst vociferous cheers, over the heads of the crowd, he knelt down in the mud and administered to the dying man the consolations of religion. Then, mounting the parapet of the bridge, he harangued the multitude, rescued the Marshal from their hands by promising to intercede with the Regent for Broussel, and proceeded to fulfil his mission, the vast throng kneeling for his benediction.

The Archbishop found Anne of Austria boiling with indignation. Contemning the clamour of insolent *canaille*, and suspecting the ambitious prelate—whose influence over the lower classes of Paris

had been maliciously brought to her recollection, with injurious comments, by Mazarin—of fostering the outbreak, she received his advice and his proffers of service with fierce displeasure and menacing gestures, which all her powers of dissimulation were unable to control. She scoffed at his representations of danger, and declared that rather than release her prisoners she would strangle them with her own hands. At length, unable any longer to retain the slightest appearance of composure, she swept disdainfully from the presence chamber, and slammed the door of the little adjoining room to which she was accustomed to retire. The courtiers, though really uneasy, flattered the mood of their mistress. Some openly mocked at the astonished prelate; some paid him ironical compliments on his popularity with his flock; some imitated the cries of Broussel's beldame. De Retz, though incensed and alarmed at the demeanour of the Queen, yielded to the urgent entreaties, and even gentle violence of Orleans and Mazarin, who shuddered at the peril, and issued forth again with La Meilleraie to pacify the insurgents.

The Marshal, who was a man of impetuous temperament, having mounted his horse, galloped among the crowd, brandishing his sword and shouting "Long live the King, liberty for Broussel."

The people in the distance, unable to catch his words, and mistaking his intentions, overwhelmed him and his escort with a shower of missiles. The soldiers fired with deadly effect, and pursued the flying multitude to an open space called the Croix de Trahoir, where they were swallowed up by converging torrents of the insurgents. In the meanwhile De Retz had been seized, and carried along with joyous shouts by a mud-grimed body of his admirers into the *mêlée*, where the blow of a stone, behind the ear, felled him to the ground. As he lay partially stunned, an infuriated ragman presented a pistol to his head in order to blow out his brains. With admirable presence of mind he exclaimed, "Hold, wretch; ah! if your father only saw you." The ragman, shocked at the idea of killing his father's friend, looked at his victim, recognised the Archbishop, and, stricken with horror at the crime he had been about to commit, uttered penitential howlings. The multitude, attracted by the cries, hurried eagerly to the spot, permitting La Meillerai a second time to escape. Tenderly raising De Retz, they bore him back to the palace "to tell Madame Anne the will of the people."

The Coadjutor again pressed upon the Regent the necessity of conceding the popular demands, and was warmly supported by la Meillerai, who

bore grateful testimony to the great and perilous services De Retz had rendered the Crown, and to the irresistible force of the insurrection. But Anne of Austria, more enraged than ever, and confirmed in her unjust suspicions by the evident sway the Coadjutor exercised over her rebellious subjects, repaid his exertions with bitter reproaches, and rejected his counsels with scorn and defiance. The vague promises which terror extorted from the Cardinal he knew to be worthless. Making the most of these, however, and assisted by the promptings of hunger and the approaching night-fall, he prevailed on the majority of the insurgents to disperse. Then, faint with fatigue, long fasting, and the pain of severe contusions on his head and side, he returned to the Archiepiscopal Palace.

When De Retz reached home, his mind became a prey to the most gloomy emotions; the evident dislike of the Regent wounded his vanity, and dashed down the ambitious hopes he had founded on her former favour; her resentful distrust, so ungrateful, and so unfounded in the present emergency, cut him to the soul, and filled him with dark forebodings. As he tossed restlessly on his couch, racked by anguish of mind and body, one of his friends, arriving from the Palais Royal, brought him intelligence that the Court was

flushed with extravagant exultation at the rapid dispersion of the insurgents, and that his own adventures during the day had been an acceptable theme of jest and sarcastic comment at the Regent's supper. Later on, a message was brought to him from Marshal la Meillerai warning him to provide for his safety, as it had been determined to exile him to Quimper, to shut up Broussel in the citadel of Havre, and to banish the Parliament to Montargis. Starting up with an oath, he inveighed against the folly and ingratitude of the Court, and vowed before the following night to have all Paris at his feet.

The capital was divided into sixteen sections, in each of which the substantial citizens were regularly mustered and trained to arms, under officers chosen by themselves. The Regent and Mazarin, in their ignorance of the disposition of the middle classes, relied with confidence on the loyalty of the Municipal Guards, and had issued directions to them to assemble for the defence of order on the following day. In fact, although the burghers had assumed arms to protect their houses from pillage, they had hitherto remained inactive spectators of the movement to rescue Broussel. But the commanding officers of the principal quarters, and still more their wives, were devoted to De Retz; and the citizens

*Regent who only then they  
pursuing he had  
helped at uprising.*

generally, while anxious to protect their property from the rabble, were full of zeal for the Parliament and of hatred for Cardinal Mazarin. The Coadjutor sent for some of the leading inhabitants of the different sections, painted in the darkest colours the designs of the Government, and arranged with them the plan of a general insurrection. Then issuing forth at midnight, in the dress of a cavalier, he traversed the streets, rousing up his adherents in the chambers, and troubling the air with sinister rumours and vague alarms of approaching danger. At the same time his numerous aides-de-camp among the inferior nobles—the dark brood of social corruption, skilled from long practice in all the arts of sedition—penetrating in the guise of artisans the dens of poverty and crime in the neighbourhood of Notre Dame, and flitting about the watch-fires on the Quai des Orfevres, where bands of desperadoes bivouacked for the night, howling and dancing around the flames, spread disquieting reports regarding the fate of Broussel, and incited the populace to rescue or avenge him. Having laid the train and lit the match, De Retz returned home to await the explosion.

The tocsin rang out in loud peals through the different quarters. The alarmed citizens, rushing forth at the summons, learned with indignation

from their leaders the perfidious projects of the detested Italian, and hastened to range themselves under the civic banners. The motley population of the poorer regions streamed forth again; some brandishing the implements of their crafts, some carrying broken match-locks, some clad in tarnished cuirasses, decorated with half-effaced emblems of the Holy League, or dragging along rusty pikes that had done service at Agincourt. Strong chains were drawn across the entrances of the streets, and barricades were piled up at every point of advantage. At five o'clock the Parliament assembled, decreed the arrest of Comminges and his accomplices, and the impeachment of the ministers; and resolved to proceed in a body to the Palais Royal, to demand the release of their colleagues.

In the meantime the Chancellor Seguier had been summoned at an early hour to the Palace, where he received from Mazarin a written mandate, with orders to deliver it without delay to the Parliament. His brother, the Bishop of Meaux, and his beautiful daughter, the Duchess of Sully, on being informed of the hazardous mission entrusted to him, insisted on accompanying him to share his danger. Their coach was stopped, amidst hostile manifestations at the first barricade. The Chancellor, resolute to discharge

his duty at all risks, and hoping to accomplish the journey to the Palace of Justice unmolested on foot, alighted, and sent the carriage with his brother and daughter to await his arrival at the Hotel de Luynes. The Bishop and his niece found the mansion silent and closely-barred, and as they were still knocking for admittance, they perceived Seguier flying towards the Court-yard for his life, closely pursued by a savage mob. A sleepy woman-servant, moved by the cries and prayers of the Duchess, gave the fugitives entrance, and had barely time to show them a closet concealed in the pannelling of the hall, when the outer doors were burst in by the rabble with triumphant yells. The insurgents searched all the apartments, fired up the chimneys, and sounded the wainscoating with the butt-ends of their muskets, venting their rage in frightful threats and imprecations. The Chancellor, believing that his last hour was come, confessed to the Bishop of Meaux, and prepared to meet his fate. But before his pursuers were able to discover his hiding-place, they were dislodged by the attack of a body of the Swiss Guards, whom Marshal la Meilleraie led to his rescue. The unhappy objects of the popular fury, having already tasted of the bitterness of death, set out again, under the protection of the troops, to encounter the baffled vengeance of their assail-

ants. The mob, rallying in the streets, charged the escort, and riddled the carriage with a volley of musketry. The Duchess, struck by a bullet, fell insensible into her father's arms. But the Swiss fought their way gallantly through the press, and succeeded in placing the Chancellor and his family—more dead than alive—within the shelter of the Palais Royal. When Anne of Austria awoke at nine o'clock, it was to learn that the spent commotion, which she had contemptuously compared, on the preceding night, to a fire of straw, had burst forth again in universal and skilfully-organised revolt; that more than twelve hundred barricades, surmounted by the banners of her loyal companies, raised their menacing forms on every side of the Palace; and that one hundred thousand citizens were in arms to wrest the popular magistrates from her grasp.

The danger that gathered round the Regent, far from appalling her, only exasperated her pride. In vain the Governor of Paris, and such of the city authorities as remained faithful to their trust, rushing pale and breathless into her presence, in disordered and stained apparel which bore evidence to the perils they had encountered, warned her that the excited people were ready to trample her guards under foot, and to tear down the palace stone from stone. In vain

Orleans, Mazarin, and the crest-fallen courtiers, with tears in their eyes, implored her to yield. In vain Molé and his colleagues, who had marched in long procession from the Palace of Justice through the insurgent hosts, entreated her to save the realm from the catastrophe in which conflicting passions were about to plunge it. She vehemently reproached the First President with the seditious conduct of the Parliament, and denounced against it a vengeance which should be memorable to all succeeding times. Tears of rage and scorn gushed from her eyes at the pusillanimous desertion of her Council. But her own resolution never faltered; she declared she would never yield to the dictation of vile *canaille*. One ray of hope flashed across her gloomy meditations as she sat aloof in her little grey chamber—as her usual retiring room was called—calm upon her brow, fury and almost despair in her heart. Instinctively recognising in the formidable movement that so suddenly confronted her the master hand which had organised and impelled it, she sent for the Coadjutor. De Retz replied that he was her Majesty's very humble servant, but that the injuries he had received, in her service, on the previous day rendered him unable to leave his bed.

In the meantime the Parliament had set out, on their return to the Palace of Justice, in order to de-

liberate on the Regent's answer to their petition. The magistrates were soon stopped and questioned by the ferocious populace, and being unable to announce the release of Broussel, had a narrow escape of being torn to pieces. Several of them casting away their robes, fled for their lives. Molé, incapable of fear, bore with undaunted composure the violence and insults, for which he was the especial mark. But, though unmoved at his own danger, he saw with patriotic anguish that the safety of the city, and even of the monarchy were at stake; and he slowly retraced his way to the Palais Royal, determined to break, by a supreme effort of his iron will, the unbending obstinacy of the Regent. Entering her presence again, he addressed her in words of stern remonstrance, to which her ears had long been unaccustomed. His passionate energy, the agonised apprehension for the fate of his young Sovereign that shook his intrepid nature, struck her dumb, and quelled her haughty spirit. In the lurid light which his burning eloquence threw upon the picture of impending ruin, she at length saw the terrible peril of the State. The Princesses of the Blood, and the ladies of her household, chilled with terror to the marrow of their bones, flung themselves at her feet and besought her to have pity on them. The unfortunate Queen of England, a penniless outcast in her native land,

mournfully seconded their prayers, assuring Anne that the civil war which had laid her husband's throne in the dust had not worn such a terrible aspect, at the beginning, as this insurrection now presented. The cries and imprecations that rose nearer and more threatening in the air, told her, in language that could no longer be mistaken, that the stormy wave of revolution was fast sapping the foundations of the throne. She felt the sceptre of Regency trembling in her grasp; she saw the crown tottering on the youthful brow of her son; and, burning with shame and indignation, yielded to inexorable necessity. Royal carriages were despatched to bring back the liberated magistrates to their homes. The whole capital, frantic with joy, flocked to swell the triumphal entry of Broussel. The Parliament gave him a public reception, and then, on his proposal, decreed that the citizens should lay down their arms, and demolish the barricades. In a few hours the vast multitudes had quietly dispersed, traffic flowed again without impediment through its myriad channels, and every vestige of the revolt had disappeared. The whole struggle, so furious and so brief, rose and fell as if it were some magic spectacle that had started into life and vanished at successive waves of an enchanter's wand. This was the first act of the strange drama of the Fronde.

## CHAPTER V.

THE rude lesson she had received from the popular party which she held in such contempt, without altering Anne of Austria's determination to uphold with a high hand all the arbitrary prerogatives of the Crown, taught her the value of Mazarin's prudent counsel not to attempt a blow at the Parliament until the presence of Condé, with his troops, enabled her to strike with decisive effect. All her hopes of triumph and revenge now rested on the Prince. The empire which the Cardinal had established over her mind and her affections was not, indeed, sensibly impaired. But she began almost involuntarily to distrust gentleness so little in unison with her own fierce passions; to doubt whether he possessed force and decision of character sufficient to oppose revolutionary violence. The rank, the principles, the imperious nature, the unrivalled military genius, and the repeated pledges of the victor of Lens led her to count upon him with confidence as the surest support and avenger of her outraged

authority. Dissembling her feelings in order to gain time to concert a plan of operations with the Prince, she sent again for De Retz, upon whom the success of the outbreak seems to have acted as a sovereign restorative, received him with flattering professions of penitence and esteem, and requested him to pay the equally contrite Cardinal a visit of reconciliation. The Coadjutor found the minister in familiar conference with Broussel, heaping civilities on the bewildered old councillor, and was welcomed with open arms. But his political insight was too keen to be deceived a second time by the fair appearances of the Court. He saw that the struggle between the Regent and the Parliament—between Mazarin and himself—was only beginning. Distrusting the ability of the magistrates to withstand the Government, he secretly laboured with all his energy and skill to build up a mighty auxiliary confederacy of great nobles and popular leaders, of which he had already laid the foundations, and by means of which he intended to hurl his Italian rival from power, and to mount into his vacant seat.

Strange to say, the chief of the Fronde, who figured in his schemes, who was to give the new coalition cohesion and irresistible force, was the same personage on whom the Regent relied to

dash it to pieces. The splendid genius of Condé had kindled in the mind of De Retz an ardent admiration, which the exasperation of disappointed hope, envenomed by a long and unsparing interchange of injuries and insults, was never able to extinguish. It was no secret to him how angrily the Prince chafed at the political ascendancy of Mazarin, and he had artfully fed this impatient humour by opening before Condé's ambition the prospect of unbounded sway during the minority of the King, if he would rid the kingdom of the low-born foreigner who monopolised the Regent's favour. With unscrupulous art, he secretly fomented the public hatred and distrust of the Government. Every day new rumours of hostile projects on the part of the Regent, some of them of the wildest extravagance, but all greedily devoured by popular credulity and suspicion, and all catching some colour of probability from the advance of troops towards the capital, provoked formidable tumults. On one occasion the Parisians were thrown into a paroxysm of terror by a report that the Queen of Sweden had arrived with an army of Amazons to avenge her sister sovereign. Every day ribald Mazarinades, and caricatures equally witty and coarse, depicting the amorous relations of Anne of Austria and her minister, were flung upon the seething capital from

secret presses, to feed its rancorous and prurient humour. When the Regent went to visit a favourite convent or church, insulting verses, loudly chaunted by dishevelled demireps, assailed her ears. Her hours of repose were disturbed by continual alarms. Mazarin no longer dared to stir from the Palace. Distracted by apprehensions, he was incapable of giving his mistress advice, except to urge her departure from a scene of so much danger and discomfort. But she bided her time with the patience of deep hatred. When she considered her preparations sufficiently advanced, she sent the young King and the Cardinal quietly from the city, covered their retreat with admirable coolness, and then retired in open day to Ruel, the country house of the Duchess of Aiguillono. There she summoned Condé to join her.

The first step Anne of Austria took, when beyond the reach of popular sedition, left the magistrates without a doubt regarding the nature of her intentions. This was to order the arrest of Chavigny and Chateauneuf. Both of these statesmen, and especially Chavigny, were known to cultivate intimate relations with prominent members of the Parliament, and were objects of Mazarin's jealous aversion. Chavigny was shut up in the Castle of Vincennes, of which he had long been

governor; Chateauneuf, less obnoxious to the Regent, was exiled to the province of Berri. The Parliament, restrained by Molé in observance of the pledge that had been given to Orleans, and renewed to the Regent when Broussel was set at liberty, had for some weeks forborne discussion upon the disputed prerogative of arbitrary arrest, with a tacit understanding of corresponding forbearance on the part of the Government. But the arrest of Chavigny and Chateauneuf, universally attributed to the perfidious counsels of the Cardinal, produced an explosion of rage in the Palace of Justice which swept away every tendency to moderation. The High Court returned the blow by passing a resolution to deliberate on its decree passed in 1622, after the murder of Concini, which forbade foreigners to accept office in France upon pain of death. It dispatched the First President, at the head of a deputation, to Ruel, to request the Regent to return to Paris with the King, and either to set the prisoners free or bring them to trial. The deputation was also commissioned to invite the Princes of the Blood to attend a sitting of the Chamber, at which the thorny question of arbitrary imprisonment was to be discussed.

The envoys were received by Anne of Austria at a public audience. Condé had arrived at Ruel;

had been welcomed with joyful pride by the Queen, with humble deference by the Cardinal, as the saviour of the Monarchy; and had renewed his professions of devoted loyalty. Orleans was seemingly full of zeal in her cause. Supported by the chiefs of the House of Bourbon she laughed the demands of the magistrates to scorn. The Princes also rejected their summons with menaces and disdain. Hopeless of a pacific solution, the deputation returned to Paris to assist in taking measures for the defence of the city.

But the somewhat extravagant manifestation of loyalty by Orleans and Condé, which had driven the magistrates to despair, cloaked much secret hesitation, and an under-current of private intrigue. The representations of De Retz had borne fruit in the Prince's mind; and the impressions of former conferences were deepened in a stolen visit, which he now paid the Coadjutor at Notre Dame. Although from principle a firm supporter of the throne, to which he stood in near succession; and although regarding the political pretensions of councillors of Parliament, and the factious violence of the Parisian rabble with as much amazement, anger, and contempt as Anne of Austria herself, it was neither his interest nor his wish to establish the foreign favourite in the seat of Richelieu. The part which

Anne designed for him, that of executing the policy shaped in the brain of her able minister, presented to his mind in every odious and humiliating aspect by the taunts of the keen-witted Parisians, revolted his pride. His family experience taught him to appreciate the suggestion of De Retz, that the recognition of the principle of individual liberty, which the Parliament demanded, might hereafter prove a safeguard for himself. When, therefore, the Regent, at the next sitting of the Council of State, having expatiated with acrimony on the rebellious spirit of the capital, confidently appealed to Condé to reduce it to submission, to her intense astonishment and mortification, instead of returning a ready assent, he started difficulties, spoke of conciliation, and ended by offering himself as a mediator between the Crown and the Parliament. Orleans, greatly relieved by this unexpected turn of affairs, promptly gave his voice for peace. No other member venturing to advocate a policy which seemed too bold for the fiery Prince, Anne of Austria broke up the meeting in silent indignation.

A resort to the sword for the purpose of cutting the political knot being now out of the question, Orleans and Condé were authorised as representatives of the King to discuss terms of accommoda-

tion with the Presidents Molé and De Mesmes, the delegates of the Parliament. The Presidents again submitted for acceptance the articles passed by the United Chambers in the Hall of St. Louis. Those conferring on the High Court a partial control over the finances and freedom of debate, already allowed in a maimed form by the Regent, were admitted without much difficulty. But upon the article securing to every Frenchman the right of being interrogated by his legal judges within twenty-four hours after his arrest, she was as unyielding as ever. Though rendered almost powerless by the desertion of the Lieutenant-General and the other Princes of the Blood, she fought the battle of the prerogative single-handed, with stubborn resolution. Mazarin, however, seeing in the ebullitions of arrogant temper which continually troubled Condé's intercourse with the Parliamentary delegates, the presage of a speedy change in his policy, excited all his influence to induce his mistress to temporise. He soothed her scruples with assurances that a short experience of the insolence of the Parisian demagogues would drive the imperious Prince into the extremity of antagonism to the popular cause; that, even at the worst, the King, on attaining his majority, would not be bound by the acts of the Regency. Slowly yielding to the arguments of her far-seeing

minister, Anne of Austria offered to concede immunity from arbitrary imprisonment to the magistrates, reserving the irresponsible dominion of the Crown over the princes and nobles. But Molé and De Mesmes, worthy champions of a beneficent principle, would not consent that any Frenchman, however high, or however mean, should be excepted from its protection.

On the 24th of October, 1648, all the articles passed in the Hall of St. Louis, embodied in a Declaration drawn up by Molé, were accepted without reserve by the Regent, after one of those terrible mental conflicts which rage only in strong, passionate natures, and ever leave behind them indelible traces of their fury. This celebrated Declaration was a noble charter of constitutional freedom, throwing, so far as was possible in the circumstances of that particular time, over the liberty and the property of Frenchmen, the shield of a legal guarantee; a noble monument to the enlightened patriotism, and the lofty courage of the great magistrates who framed it. On the same day the Treaty of Westphalia, concluded at Munster by securing the depression of the House of Austria, and the independence of the minor German States, elevated France to the leading place in Europe, and consecrated the triumph of Richelieu's foreign policy. It was a day memor-

able in the history of France, and memorable in the life of Condé; which should have linked his name in imperishable renown with the freedom, as well as with the greatness of his country. Happy would it have been for his fame had he continued to restrain his fiery genius to the paths of national glory and national felicity. Happy would it have been for France had she devoted but a small part of the energy and talent, of the blood and treasure, squandered in efforts to extend her supremacy abroad, to preserve and develop constitutional liberty at home.

The Treaty of Munster and the Declaration of October 24 were celebrated by public rejoicings, and by all the outward signs of a general reconciliation. The King and the Regent returned to Paris. Chavigny and Chateauneuf regained their liberty, and the Parliament silently receded from its menacing attitude towards Cardinal Mazarin. But the interval of partial tranquillity that followed was a period of passive hostility rather than of peace. Mortified pride and baffled vengeance consumed the heart of the Regent. She made little secret of the grief and abhorrence with which she viewed the concessions wrung from her, or of her determination, at a more favourable juncture, to free the royal authority from such ignominious fetters. The unexpected desertion

of Condé especially galled her. She never thoroughly trusted him again. The proceedings at Ruel had riveted for ever the ascendancy of Mazarin over her mind and her affections. The Princes of the Blood, as bitter experience taught her, had each his own independent aims, and claimed to share her power during the minority of her son. Mazarin was her creature, bound to her by every bond of gratitude and hope; whose political existence was inseparable from her own; whose marvellous ability and sustaining sympathies were absolutely enlisted in her service.

The frank co-operation of Condé, however, was essential to the success of her policy. Dissembling her indignation, she employed all her art to win him from his connexion with the popular party, and continually assailed his self-love with flattering tokens of regard and confidence. The Cardinal listened to all the Prince's wishes with reverential submission. But this policy of complaisance soon brought Anne of Austria into angry collision with the Duke of Orleans, and led to her receiving a mortifying proof of the unpopularity of her Government.

Condé's brother, the Prince of Conti, a youth of stunted growth, physical and mental, and of a timorous nature, had shown a predilection for an ecclesiastical career. It was the interest of the

head of the family to encourage this desire; the august dignities and the rich benefices in the Church which would reward the piety of a Prince of the Blood being treated, under the dispositions of their father's will, as equivalent to the large revenues settled on the younger son, should he elect to remain a layman. Condé, therefore, asked the Regent to transfer to Conti the nomination for a Cardinal's hat, which had long been promised to the Abbé la Riviere, the reigning favourite of the Lieutenant-General. Anne of Austria complied with this request without hesitation, and offered to compensate La Riviere by making him Archbishop of Rheims. But the aspiring Abbé, looking upon an archbishopric as a splendid exile, scornfully rejected the proposal, and openly reproached Anne with ingratitude for his exertions in keeping his master steady to her cause. Orleans, goaded on by his wife and daughter, hotly espoused his favourite's quarrel. In an angry interview at the Palais Royal, he came to an open rupture with the Regent; and he retired from Court. Anne of Austria at first treated his ill-humour with indifference; but no sooner had the news of the quarrel spread over Paris than all the great nobles, and all the popular leaders, thronged to the Luxembourg to offer their support. When the Lieutenant-General

appeared in the streets, the people crowded round his coach, filled the air with acclamations, and loudly urged him to seize the King and depose the Regent. Consternation filled the Palais Royal. The Regent sent her incensed brother-in-law the most pressing entreaties for a reconciliation, which he curtly rejected. Condé, alone of the Court, was in a state of supreme satisfaction. He doubled the guards at the Palace, and denounced Orleans and La Riviere as traitors. In the height of the public agitation, the Duke, stricken by a sudden panic at his own popularity, and at the display of military force, betook himself to bed, and refused to hold any further communication with Anne of Austria. She, in her alarm, regarded his feigned illness as a pretence to cloak the workings of a formidable conspiracy. Entrenched in the Palais Royal or the Luxembourg, each side expected the attack in mortal terror. This ludicrous situation might have found a tragical issue had not La Riviere, appalled by the danger of being crushed to pieces in the shock of such mighty forces, sought a private interview with the trembling Mazarin. A few words of explanation led to an arrangement. A seat in the Privy Council, and the renewed promise of a red hat appeased the wrath of the favourite. Monsieur, being assured that the peril had blown over, and

that his importance was sufficiently vindicated, condescended to accept the Regent's explanations, and restored the appearance of public tranquillity by again attending the Court.

The undisguised preference of the Parisians for his cousin, whom he despised, and their want of appreciation of his own services, cooled Condé's favourable disposition towards the Constitutional party. As Mazarin had predicted, one or two visits to the Palace of Justice converted this coldness into bitter enmity. The suspicious bearing of the Regent, and the arts of the Coadjutor, kept alive a general feeling of uneasiness, which found expression in the exaggerated statements and the irritating language of the democrats of the Chambers. Condé's imperious tone, and disdainful manner in repressing the factious cavillings which invaded every department of the State, and even the household of the young King, in search of grievances, often fictitious or frivolous, provoked defiant and insolent retorts from some of the younger magistrates, which lashed him into fury. It was in vain that De Retz, who watched the fluctuations of his mind with anxiety, repeated every argument, which, by convincing his judgment, or stimulating his ambition, might prevent his serving the interests of Cardinal Mazarin. Bred up in deep veneration for royalty, his

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haughty soul could not brook alliance with the low-born demagogues who had bearded him in the Parliament. "My name," he said, "is Louis of Bourbon, and I do not wish to shake the Crown." Had he consulted sound policy, and his own dignity, he would have curbed his indignation, and co-operated with the patriotic Molé in upholding the Declaration of October 24, in opposing alike the excesses of faction and of authority. With his position and prestige this course was not merely feasible, it was the course most consonant with his own honour and advantage. But entrusted from his earliest youth with the supreme conduct of the greatest undertakings; having from the very first bound fortune to his chariot-wheels; being accustomed to see his will a law to all around him, he had never acquired the habits of self-control and reflection, or the steadiness of purpose which come from wrestling with difficulties. His glorious intellect and his clear judgment were the sport of unruly passions, often as short lived as they were violent. His friend Marshal Grammont, a staunch adherent of the Court, represented to him, while still swayed by intemperate anger at the language of a few obscure Councillors, that by accomplishing the designs of the Regent, he would command her gratitude for ever, and place himself in a position

to become the arbiter of the Minister's fate. Hurried along by wayward and unreasoning humours, he not only broke off his relations with the Coadjutor, but hastened to abet Anne of Austria with all the ardour of selfish ambition and revenge, in crushing the Parliament and tearing up the Charter so recently extorted through his connivance.

The sanction of the Lieutenant General of the realm was necessary for the use of military force against the Capital. The mind of Orleans was still estranged from the Regent by the irritation of scarcely-healed grievances; his pride was swollen by his unbounded popularity with the citizens; and the tortures of a severe attack of gout rendered him unusually testy. But Anne of Austria, in assiduous visits to his sick couch, exerted the feminine blandishments and the force of will which had so long held him in control. The treacherous Duke, after a few uneasy mental pangs, not only betrayed the confiding affection of his faithful Parisians, but entered cordially and even eagerly into the Regent's project to chastise them with famine and the sword. Condé proposed, in secret council at the Palais Royal, that the Court should retire to the Arsenal, which adjoined the Bastille, and thence issue a decree of exile against the Parliament. If the magistrates offered resistance,

he undertook to enter the city at the head of his troops, sweep the streets with his artillery, and clear the Palace of Justice at the point of the bayonet. This bold plan of operations, which promised prompt and decisive success in the hands of a great soldier, was warmly approved by the Regent. But Orleans and Mazarin were terrified at the risks of discomfiture in a street fight. Anne of Austria, reluctantly yielding to their timid remonstrances, agreed to resort to the slower, though, in reality, more hazardous, measure of a blockade.

In the meantime De Retz had not been idle. The alienation of Condé, and the embarrassed demeanour of Monsieur warned him of the danger that was brewing. Having no faith in the ability of the Parliament to resist the Government, supported by the greatest general of the age and the soldiers of Lens, he had succeeded in banding together the chiefs of the great aristocratic houses in a secret league; and he treated for assistance with the Archduke Leopold at Brussels, through Madame de Chevreuse. The Princes of Vendôme, the Dukes of Bouillon, Elbœuf, and Longueville, the Prince of Marsillac, with their allies and dependents in the provinces, were prepared by his address to draw their swords for the Parliament. He and they were guided by animosity

and interest to a common goal, the destruction of Cardinal Mazarin, and perhaps the deposition of the Regent, by means of an armed confederacy, ostensibly organised for the defence of the Declaration of the 24th of October. But in order to secure the stability and the harmonious action of the league against the jealous rivalries of so many proud magnates, it was necessary to place at its head a Prince of the Blood. Condé, whose adhesion to it was a cardinal point in his policy, had broken through his meshes. Orleans had also abandoned the Parliament. It seemed more than doubtful whether the timid Conti could be induced to venture into open opposition to his fiery brother.

Revolving this difficulty in his mind, De Retz went one day to visit Madame de Longueville. The beautiful and accomplished Duchess was at that time on very bad terms with the Regent, and with her elder brother. She was devoured by an ambitious fancy to shine in the sphere of politics. But, although brilliant and cultivated, she was not formed of sufficiently stern stuff for the rôle she coveted. Plastic under the influence of love, as clay in the hands of the potter, her opinions were swayed by her affections, and whoever engrossed her heart also governed her mind, and directed the current of her ideas in the channel of

his own interests. With the Regent, she had never been a favourite. Anne of Austria found the languishing airs of the spoiled beauty, and *bel esprit* of the Hotel Rambouillet insufferable, and delighted in inflicting on her petty mortifications. Condé was said to have never forgiven her for revealing to his father the foolish project he had formed of marrying Mademoiselle Vigean. His conduct towards her at this period was singularly harsh and unfeeling. He treated her political pretensions with pitiless ridicule, and publicly inveighed, in unmeasured terms, against her gallantries, counselling her husband to shut her up for life in one of his castles. Madame de Longueville therefore lived retired from the Court in sullen discontent. Her younger brother Conti worshipped her with almost idolatrous love. Her husband, though not in the most intimate relations with her, was blessed with an indulgent disposition which rendered him incapable of treating her with severity. Already dissatisfied with the Government for refusing him the custody of the fortresses of Havre and Pont de l'Arche in Normandy, the sarcasms of the Prince, upon the subject of his wife's infidelity, only served to wound his pride, and embitter his resentment. It needed but a few artful hints, thrown out without apparent purpose by the Coadjutor, to conjure up

before Madame de Longueville's imagination a dazzling vision of triumphant ambition and gratified vengeance. The prospect that arose before her of dividing the allegiance of France with Anne of Austria as Queen of the Fronde, of at once baffling her imperious brother, and wounding him where his pride was most exquisitely sensitive, by arraying against him the members of his own family in league with the demagogues of the capital, filled her with joy which no words could paint. She embraced the subtle prelate's schemes with rapture, engaged to remain behind in Paris, in the expected contingency of the Regent's departure, and pledged herself for the adhesion of Conti, of her husband, and of the Prince of Marsillac, to the cause of the Parliament.

De Retz found an equally enthusiastic and still more energetic ally in the Duchess of Bouillon. For the rare combination of beauty, bewitching grace, winning manners, and lively talents, this charming conspirator had few rivals; and she was distinguished besides by the unusual characteristic of unblemished fidelity to her husband. Her animosity towards Anne of Austria was intense, in consequence of the Regent having betrayed to Cardinal Richelieu the secret of the conspiracy of Cinq-Mars, which cost Bouillon his principality of Sedan, and had nearly cost him his head. By

birth a subject of Spain, Madame de Bouillon maintained close relations with the Court of Brussels, of which she had been one of the brightest ornaments. Brave, ardent, self-sacrificing, and full of resources, she schemed, plotted and even coquetted with untiring energy, in concert with her lord, for the purpose of obtaining the satisfaction of his claims. She now established an intimate political liason with De Retz, who, while confessing in his memoirs the power of her fascinations, bears unimpeachable testimony to her singular virtue.

It was not in the nature either of Anne of Austria or of Condé to sleep upon a bold resolution deliberately adopted. They acted with a promptitude and secrecy which disconcerted the Coadjutor, and well-nigh frustrated all his plans. The measures resolved upon at the Palais Royal were veiled with profound dissimulation. Orleans, carefully guarded by La Riviere, now in close alliance with Mazarin, did not drop a hint of what was coming even to his wife. Condé was equally reticent with his idolised mother, whose existence was bound up in his. At the customary public receptions on New Year's Day, 1649, the gracious demeanour of the Regent was the subject of general comment and congratulation among the members of the High Court. On the 5th of January

Marshal Grammont entertained the Court. Anne of Austria passed the evening at the Palais Royal in pleasant conversation with her household. Vague rumours, that had somehow got afloat, of her intended flight from the Capital, appearing to disquiet some of her ladies, she made them a subject of mirth, mocking, in merry humour, at the absurd fears of the Parisians. At her usual hour, dismissing her retinue, she retired to bed. When all was quiet, after midnight, she rose again, roused up a few confidential attendants, and ordered the King and his brother to be dressed. Leading her sons by the hand, she left the palace by a secret staircase, traversed the gardens, and entering a coach that waited at a private entrance, drove through the city gates, and halted at a short distance without the walls. In the meantime Orleans, Condé, and Mazarin quitted the Hotel de Grammont together on foot. The Cardinal repaired without delay to join his mistress. Orleans, proceeding to the Luxembourg, awoke his wife, who received his commands to prepare for a journey in a very refractory spirit. Condé went to his family hotel, called up his mother and wife, and dragged the reluctant Conti out of bed. By three o'clock in the morning all the Royal family, with the exception of Madame de Longueville, who, pleading pregnancy, had refused to stir,

were assembled together, in no very sociable temper, in the Regent's capacious coach, on their way to St. Germain.

The weather was bitterly cold. In the narrow domestic economy of that time, the King of France, though master of many spacious palaces, seems to have possessed only one complete set of furniture. When he changed his residence, that which he left was dismantled and deserted; and the Royal moveables accompanied the Court in huge baggage-waggons. No preparations having been made at the Chateau of St. Germain, for fear of exciting suspicion, the Royal party found it destitute of food, of fuel, and of the common necessities of habitation. The resources of the little neighbouring village were inadequate to supply their simplest wants. A few mattresses, one of which Orleans appropriated to himself, and a small quantity of the humblest fare were procured with difficulty. Bread rose to famine prices. Straw was sold at a fabulous rate. The wood, hastily cut in the forest, was green, and would not burn. During the first twenty-four hours after their arrival the majority of the ladies and gentlemen, so hastily torn from their luxurious quarters in Paris, fasted, shivered, and watched in the damp and desolate rooms.

Anne of Austria, before quitting the Palais

Royal, had addressed letters to the great public bodies of the capital and the leading members of the nobility, charging the Parliament with treasonable designs against the King's person. The nobles were ordered instantly to repair to St. Germain, and it was announced that the Royal Armies were marching on the capital. The news spread like wildfire, throwing the populace into a paroxysm of rage and terror. Armed mobs seized the city gates, took possession of the waggons that were bearing away the King's effects, and would have pillaged the Palais Royal and the Palais Mazarin had not the Parliament placed these buildings under the charge of its own officers. The sight of crowds of panic-stricken courtiers, choking up all the avenues of exit in their hurry to escape to St. Germain, added to the popular exasperation. But the majority of the magistrates and substantial citizens were chilled with dismay. The desertion of Orleans, who had promised to defend them against the evil practices of "Madame Anne," particularly depressed them. Yet such was the affection which the false Duke inspired, that while a Decree of the High Court forbade the removal of a single article from the Royal palaces or the Hotel Mazarin, carriages bearing the arms of Monsieur were allowed passage through the gates without question.

The desponding fears that weighed down the Parisian middle class filled De Retz with apprehension. All the confederate nobles, with the exception of the Duke of Bouillon, were still in the provinces, busy with their preparations for the coming struggle. Bouillon was proud, wary, and almost morbidly jealous of his shadowy dignity of sovereign prince. Suspecting trickery, and disdaining the companionship of greasy citizens, he listened to the explanations of the Coadjutor in very bad humour, refused to commit himself by any overt act in the absence of a Prince of the Blood, and even showed some disposition to repair to Court. Madame de Longueville received the disheartened prelate in tears. She had just been apprised that her irresolute husband, on his way up from Normandy to join her, had stopped at St. Germain. It was agreed that she should send the Marquis of Noirmoutier with letters to him and the Prince of Conti. De Retz, seeing in the evident desire for an accommodation that pervaded the minds of the magistrates, and in the absence of his high-born allies, the possible collapse of his schemes, began to think of his own safety. He had received orders to attend the Court, and he now thought it prudent to feign obedience. Setting out with great pomp from Notre Dame, he proceeded slowly through the

most crowded streets, and, with tears rolling down his dejected face, showered his benedictions on the crowds who were attracted by his equipage. The people clamoured, and stopped his horses; but he besought them, in tones of anguish, not to expose themselves to the wrath of incensed majesty by arresting his journey, and detaining him to share their perils. His words had the desired effect. The postillions were dragged from their seats, the horses were unharnessed, and De Retz, elevated on a dray, was escorted back in triumph to his palace by a body-guard of shrill-tongued viragoes, while a band of sister furies shrieked and danced around the burning fragments of his coach. On reaching home, he addressed a submissive letter to the Regent, deploring his inability to obey her commands.

While the Chambers still hesitated between submission and defiance, a letter arrived in the King's name, exiling the Parliament to Montargis. The High Court, having been forewarned of its contents, resolved that out of respect for the Royal Authority the mandate should be deposited, unopened, in their Registry; and despatched Omer Talon and the other law officers of the Crown to learn from the Queen the names of the false accusers, who had calumniated her loyal companies. The deputation was compelled to halt before it reached

St. Germain ; was kept waiting for several hours of an inclement night, on the top of a bleak hill, exposed to a violent snow storm ; and was then sternly denied audience. This injurious treatment of their envoys showed the incensed magistrates that there only remained to them disgraceful submission or vigorous resistance. Casting aside their irresolution, they issued a decree declaring Cardinal Mazarin a public enemy, and the author of all the disorders of the realm, and denouncing against him the penalties of outlawry if found within the kingdom after the expiration of eight days.

Having lifted up the gage of battle, the High Court convoked a great council of all the notabilities of Paris to consider measures of defence. The meeting was attended by the Duke of Montbazon, Governor of the City, the Provost of the Merchants, and every person eminent in his public or private capacity, with the exception of the Duke of Bouillon, and the Military Governor, Marshal la Mothe Houdincourt, who declined to declare themselves, unless countenanced by a Prince of the Royal Family.

The burgher guard, with its reserve of partially drilled artizans, numbered about twenty thousand men. But the prosperous middle-aged tradesmen, who chiefly composed it, not being physically

well adapted for feats of active warfare, it was decided that this force should be employed in the defence of the gates and ramparts, and of public order ; and that an army of fourteen thousand foot and five thousand horse, of more mettlesome materials, should be levied for offensive operations. In order to provide funds for the campaign, the Parliament issued orders to the collectors of revenue throughout the kingdom to pay the proceeds of the taxes into the Hotel de Ville. It also imposed a house-tax on the Capital ; every mansion with a *porte-cochere* being assessed at one hundred and fifty francs, shops and the meaner habitations at thirty francs each. The magistrates contributed with extraordinary generosity, and the Coadjutor undertook to equip and maintain a regiment at his own expense.

These bold proceedings produced a signal effect both at Paris and St. Germain. The citizens were roused from their despondency to the highest pitch of ardour. The Regent was wild with anger ; but Mazarin's spirit quailed. He had no real friends even amongst the courtiers, who, finding that the hostile decrees launched against him, breathed respectful loyalty to the sovereign, began to give him cold looks, and to whisper to each other, that his was the malign influence that troubled the peace of the realm. Many of the nobles, who, although secretly dis-

affected, had gathered around the Regent, plucked up courage to avow their true sentiments. The example was set by the Duke of Elbœuf, a Prince of the house of Lorraine. Quitting the Court in the open day, he entered Paris, offered himself to the Parliament as their General, and was welcomed with acclamations.

This event was by no means pleasing to De Retz. He now felt certain of the speedy arrival of Condé and Longueville; and the aspiring aims and sudden popularity of the Lorraine Prince threatened to mar his schemes. He spent the day in spreading abroad sinister reports that Elbœuf was an agent of the Regent. After he had retired to rest, word was brought to him that the chiefs he so impatiently expected were vainly seeking admittance at one of the city gates. They had galloped off from St. Germain in the evening, but the burgher guard, ignorant of the intrigues of the Coadjutor, naturally looked upon the brother and brother-in-law of Condé as enemies, and planted a cannon against them. The rejected leaders passed many hours in a forlorn condition, exposed to the double danger of being blown to pieces by the insurgents, and of being captured by a detachment of the royal troops. At length De Retz, arriving with old Broussel, with great difficulty persuaded the suspicious citizens to give them entrance.

It was now four o'clock in the morning.

The Coadjutor carried Conti to the Palace of Justice, to offer his services to the Parliament. Conti's rank rendered this step equivalent to a demand of the supreme military command. But the timid boy, already scared by the responsibilities of his novel position, was dismayed by a chilling reception from the magistrates. The First President had just prevailed on the Chamber, despite the vehement opposition of the Coadjutor's friends, to elect Elbœuf General. The great magistrate suspected the correspondence of De Retz with the Archduke Leopold. He entirely distrusted the support of the feudal magnates, whom he knew from experience to be ever ready to sacrifice the public interests to their own. It was the policy of the Parliament to maintain in its integrity the authority of the Crown within the limits marked out by the Declaration of October; to defend it from the assaults of discontented nobles and interested agitators in league with the enemies of the kingdom. In order that the High Court might not be pushed beyond the legitimate bounds of self-defence, or compromised by schemes abhorrent to its principles, it was of the utmost importance that its General should be a servant loyally obedient to its wishes; not a master who would use it without its consent for the promotion of ulterior ends. Elbœuf, in open antagonism

with De Retz and the feudal party, promised to be far more amenable to Parliamentary control than Conti, who was their puppet. When, therefore, Elbœuf, in reply to his rival's challenge, boldly declared he would never resign the dignity conferred on him, he was greeted with loud applause, and the crest-fallen Conti retired in discomfiture.

The gravity of the crisis was fully recognised by the Coadjutor and his allies. None of the aristocratic chiefs would consent to serve under Elbœuf. They held Council in the Hotel de Bouillon to concert measures for compelling the High Court to rescind its appointment, and for cowing the obnoxious General into submission. Bouillon, roused from his sullen lethargy by the remonstrances of De Retz, consented to take an active part in the proceedings.

The Parliament assembled at an early hour on the following morning, the elated Elbœuf sitting in pride of place by the side of the First President. Conti entered alone, and quietly took his seat. Shortly afterwards the Duke of Longueville, who was not a peer of France, craved audience, and was conducted to a place. In a short speech he placed all the resources of his Government of Normandy at the service of the Chamber, and announced that his wife and

children were about to take up their abode in the Hotel de Ville as hostages for the fidelity of the Prince of Conti and himself. His words created an extraordinary sensation. Before the agitation had time to subside, the Duke of Bouillon slowly entered the Chamber, leaning on the shoulders of two gentlemen, with great parade of gout. In a few blunt sentences, he declared that he would joyfully defend the cause of the Parliament under such an illustrious prince as Conti. His speech called up Elbœuf in hot assertion of his rights. Accusation and retort were freely bandied about. In the midst of the uproar, Marshal la Mothe, Military Governor of Paris, arrived, and offered to draw his sword for the Parliament under the banner of a Prince of the House of Bourbon. The excitement was now so great that Molé requested all the contending chiefs to withdraw, until the magistrates had deliberated on the proposals they had just heard.

While this scene was being enacted in the Palace of Justice, the Coadjutor was busy unfolding the second part of the sensational drama he had so skilfully contrived. Entering the coach of Madame de Longueville, which had conveyed her husband to the Chamber, he carried its fair owner and the Duchess of Bouillon, each dressed with studied negligence and accompanied by her chil-

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dren, to the Hotel de Ville, and presented them as voluntary hostages to the vast multitude that crowded the Place de Greve. The sight of two young and beautiful Princesses, holding aloft two beautiful children, and irresistibly attractive in the artful disorder of their attire, surrendering themselves as pledges for the good faith of their husbands, at the head-quarters of the city, took the hearts of the Parisians by storm. The men shouted till they were hoarse; the women wept for joy, and the popular enthusiasm soon found an echo in the deliberations at the Palace of Justice. The majority of the magistrates repented of their engagements with Elbœuf. The insinuations sown broadcast by the Coadjutor, and which were not altogether unfounded, had borne fruit, and seriously damaged the reputation of the new General. He himself, daunted by the powerful confederacy so suddenly arrayed against him, lowered his tone of confident self-assertion, and evinced a disposition to compromise his claims. Conti, though imbecile, deformed, and a dwarf, was a Prince of the Blood, whose rank gave dignity and strength to opposition. It was clear that by rejecting him the Parliament would forfeit the assistance of the territorial magnates, whose military knowledge and provincial influence must avail much in a prolonged struggle against the Regent,

and would provoke dangerous popular tumults. The perils attending his election were comparatively remote, and might be warded off; the perils attending his rejection were certain and immediate. These considerations more than counterbalanced the arguments of the First President. The High Court, after long deliberation, passed a decree appointing Conti Commander-in-Chief; Elbœuf, Bouillon, and Marshal la Mothe, Generals; Beaufort, Marsillac, and Normoutier, Lieutenant-generals of the armies of the Parliament. Longueville departed for Normandy, to raise troops, leaving his wife, to her intense delight, installed at the Hotel de Ville, ruling with undisputed sway as Queen of the Fronde.

The defection of Conti and Longueville burst like a thunder-clap on Anne of Austria and the Cardinal. It threw Condé into transports of fury. He sought to relieve his feelings by parading a miserable hunchback, sheathed in gilded armour, before the whole Court, as the new Generalissimo of the Fronde; and, by strenuous efforts, to cut off the supplies of the capital, and such of its defenders as their exemplary prudence suffered to come within his reach. But his small army of fourteen thousand men was inadequate to seal up all the avenues of a populous city. Until the expected junction of the army of Ger-

many, under Turenne, he could do no more than occupy the more important posts in the vicinity of Paris, and send detachments of cavalry to scour the adjacent country.

The amazement that seized the minds of the Regent and her crafty minister at the powerful combination, which seemed to have sprung out of the earth to confront them, was the most flattering homage to the creative genius of De Retz. His bold and profound scheming had proved more than a match for the wary subtlety of his rival. The Cardinal trembled at the unforeseen dangers which had risen like a lion in his path, and still more at others more terrible, of which he now discerned the advancing shadows. But Anne of Austria, exasperated to a greater degree than ever against her ancient friends, the Importants, breathed only vengeance. A royal proclamation declared the princes and nobles who should not immediately retire from Paris guilty of high treason. Even this, however, did not check the epidemic of desertion from the Court, and every day saw new and powerful accessions to the insurgent ranks.

The Generals of the Parliament, with the exception of Conti, whose constitutional infirmities unfitted him for warfare, and Bouillon, who held the dignity in contempt, laboured incessantly in

drilling and organizing the city levies. The arrival of the Duke of Beaufort and the Prince of Marsillac infused fresh activity into the military preparations. The presence of the former nobleman was especially welcome to the Coadjutor. As he says himself, he wanted a "phantom to hide behind" in his manipulation of the Parisian populace; and he could not possibly have found any one more suitable for his purpose than a grandson of Henry IV., whose gallant bearing and familiar use of their idiom made him the idol of the lower classes, and whose vanity and slender capacity made him a pliant tool. Popularity, even in its sweetest moments, has its penalties. The career of the Duke was well-nigh brought to a premature close, on the day of his return to the Capital, by the too vehement caresses of the ladies of the fish-markets.

Notwithstanding the exertions of their leaders, the operations of the Parliamentary forces were far more fruitful of laughter than of glory or advantage; their martial enthusiasm within the walls being alloyed with a lamentable excess of discretion in the field. The first enterprise undertaken by the Generals was the attack of the Bastille. The Governor, being unprovided with the means of defence, intimated his intention not to offer resistance; but a military spectacle was

arranged for the encouragement of the citizen troops. A few cannons, charged with powder, opened fire against the walls. The guns of the fortress thundered in equally harmless defiance. The Duchesses of Longueville and Bouillon, arrayed in habits of blue, the colour of the Fronde, profusely sprinkled with golden slings, came and seated themselves on chairs in the neighbouring gardens of the Arsenal. Surrounded by a sling-spangled body-guard of daring young cavaliers, they exposed themselves freely to danger, within range of the hostile ramparts, and regaled themselves on sweet-meats with cheerful composure. When the garrison had made a sufficiently heroic defence, it capitulated, and marched out with all the honours of war.

A few days after this notable achievement a large body of the citizens sallied forth with great bravery of equipment, under Marshal la Mothe, to seize St. Denis. At their approach, two hundred Swiss Guards advanced from the village. A panic instantly seized the Parisian braves. Without firing a shot, they turned and fled in the wildest confusion, and never halted till they found themselves safe within the city gates. They were received by their fellow citizens with shouts of derision. Lampoons, squibs, caricatures, celebrated their prowess. The exploit of the regi-

ment of the Coadjutor and titular Archbishop of Corinth, which had borne away the palm in the race of cowardice, was termed by the irreverent Parisians "the first of the Corinthians." The public amusement was heightened by the explanation of the Generals, who announced that their troops had only retired out of profound respect for the royal flag. This laudable sentiment long remained sufficiently powerful to render the civic cohorts proof against the ridicule of their friends. Every day one or other of the chiefs led out a strong force to protect the convoys of provisions required to feed the Capital. A distant glimpse of a few of Condé's horsemen usually had the effect of sending back the doughty champions of liberty in breathless terror to the city gates; and the woeful plight of the burgher exquisites who had gone forth bedizened with the gaudiest extravagance of military foppery, bruised by falls in the muddy ditches, and grievously wounded by the brambles that had impeded their flight, kindled inextinguishable mirth amongst the laughter-loving populace. Gaiety reigned supreme, and pointed its shafts with impartial freedom. One day at a crowded meeting a dagger was seen sticking from the pocket of De Retz. "Behold," exclaimed the Duke of Beaufort, to the delighted throng, "the breviary of our Archbishop!" The

cavalry of the city, raised and maintained by the tax on the larger houses, was called the Cavalry of the "*portes cochères*" and was popularly described as being "More horse than foot, in order the better to run away from the enemy." Every evening the Duchess of Longueville held high festival in the Hotel de Ville. The superb building, shining forth a huge mountain of light, was thronged by all who were distinguished or notorious in the capital. Every variety of the motley Parisian life was represented there. The flower of the high nobility, redolent of the delicate fragrance of the Hotel Rambouillet, or the reeking odours of godless saloons, venerable ecclesiastics, foul-tongued scoffers, dignified presidents of Parliament, vulgar demagogues, fastidious prudes, flaunting courtezans, jostled each other at every step in the overflowing rooms. The ludicrous disasters of the day lent a keener edge to wit, and a more delicious zest to enjoyment. Music and dancing flung around their voluptuous spells, and an occasional council of war, at which the Duchess presided, attested the provident cares of the chiefs. The square outside, packed with a dense multitude, rang with the blare of trumpets, sounded by Conti's orders, to breathe martial fury into the souls of the citizens. This nightly *fanfarronade*, and the daily exertion of conducting a

foraging expedition to one of the city gates, and receiving it on its return, comprised the services rendered by the Prince as Commander-in-Chief. The military peals were varied by the more congenial strains of a Mazarinade, or by a stirring harangue delivered by some popular orator from the balcony of the Hotel de Ville.

In the midst of these scenes of grotesque excitement, which lapped her in an elysium of flattered vanity, the political labours of Madame de Longueville were interrupted by her accouchement. But this unseasonable event proved the occasion of her crowning triumph. The day of the child's baptism was observed as a public festival. The rite, administered by the Coadjutor, was surrounded with extraordinary pomp. The City of Paris and the Duchess of Bouillon stood sponsors; the infant, Charles Paris, was borne back from the church in triumphal procession, and then exposed, in a magnificent cradle, on the steps of the Hotel de Ville, to the enthusiastic homage of the rabble.

The ludicrous incidents of the war, however, were varied by sterner episodes, although even these were not without ridiculous features. The village of Charenton, a post of great importance for securing the entrance of supplies into the Capital, had been occupied by three thousand of

the flower of the Parisian army, under the command of the Marquis of Clanlieu, a gallant soldier. Condé, seizing with savage joy the opportunity of striking a terrible blow, rushed down upon the village with five thousand foot and three thousand horse. He directed his friend, the Duke of Chatillon, to storm the place with the infantry, while he pushed forward in person, at the head of the cavalry, in the direction of Paris to cover the assault. The garrison, stung by the shame of past disgraces, fought with desperate resolution. Quarter was neither asked nor given. Chatillon and Clanlieu fell at the head of their men in the hottest of the fight; and, after an hour's fearful carnage, Charenton was carried. One insurgent officer, the Marquis of Coignac, escaped by springing on a large fragment of ice, which floated him down the Seine into the city; the rest of the defenders were put to the sword. Blackened heaps of smouldering ruins, thickly strewn with charred corpses, and soaked in blood, alone remained to tell the story of gratified vengeance. Before the attack began, Elbœuf, having received timely intimation of Condé's purpose, assembled twenty thousand of the municipal bands to succour Clanlieu. But the sight of the redoubtable Prince, watching their tardy evolutions at the head of his cavalry, caused the hearts of the citizens to sink

within them. De Retz, booted and spurred, a sword at his side and pistols in his holsters, and Madame de Longueville, who, still ailing, had risen from her couch to distribute azure scarves with her own fair hands, vainly essayed to raise their spirits. Honour pricked them on, but discretion held them back. Elbœuf, perplexed and incapable, held a council of war, wherein it was resolved that, considering the impetuous valour of the Parisian troops, an attempt to dislodge the foe must result in the loss of valuable citizens, and the lamentations of their wives. Rather than incur the risk of such calamities, the tender-hearted General sounded a retreat. Clanlieu was abandoned to his fate, and Condé, glutted with slaughter, was left in undisturbed possession of the field.

A few days after the storming of Charenton, the Duke of Beaufort led out a numerous force to protect the return of the Marquis of Noirmoutier, who had collected in the neighbourhood of Paris a large herd of cattle. A train of shrieking amazons from the fish-markets accompanied their hero to the gate, vowing horrible retaliation upon all who should dare to assail him. The insurgents soon came into collision with a body of cavalry under Marshal Grammont. Beaufort fought like a lion, at the head of his men; though wounded and disarmed

he gallantly maintained the battle, and after a stiff contest, both sides retired. Some fugitives, however, carried exaggerated rumours of his danger into Paris. Immediately thirty thousand of the lower classes, men, women, and children, armed with spits, brooms, and every homely weapon they could snatch up in haste, rushed forth to the rescue of the King of the Markets. They found him at a considerable distance from the walls quietly awaiting the coming up of the convoy. Transported with joy at his safety, the fish-hags threw themselves upon him in a species of Bacchanalian frenzy, almost stifled him and his horse in their embraces, and then squatting over the adjacent fields watched patiently for several hours, to shield him from further peril. At last Noirmoutier, having luckily eluded the vigilance of Condé's skirmishers, made his appearance; and then, with wild laughter and tears and extravagant gambols, the vast *cortège* returned to Paris, soldiers, populace, and cattle mingled together in inextricable confusion. A charge of the Royal troops must have ended in a fearful massacre.

The ridicule provoked by their inglorious exploits, the grief daily renewed by the spectacle of their damaged finery, the ruin of their trade, the pressure of taxation, the increasing dearth of pro-

visions, soon thoroughly disgusted the substantial burghers with the war. Their feelings were shared by the majority of the Parliament. Abhorring the very name of rebellion, and armed only in legitimate defence of the Declaration of October, Molé and his friends were scared by the tragic fall of royalty in England, and learned with misgiving that their Generals had entered into a secret compact not to disband their troops until the personal demands of each had been fully satisfied. Intelligence of this favourable change of disposition was privately conveyed to Mazarin by the Municipal Authorities, who, though compelled to temporise with the insurrection, had remained staunchly loyal.

The Government, on its side, was urged by the most powerful motives to seek an accommodation. Several of the provincial Parliaments had espoused the quarrel of the Parliament of Paris, and launched Decrees of banishment against the Cardinal. Numerous towns and fortresses throughout the kingdom had declared for the Fronde. The public taxes, diverted from the royal treasury, supplied the Dukes of Longueville, La Tremouille, and other potent insurgent nobles with the means of raising armaments for the relief of the Capital. The greater part of the military force, which the peace of Munster had promised

to place at the disposal of the Regent, had either disbanded or mutinied for want of pay, or was dispersed to curb the disaffection of the provinces. The dubious conduct of Viscount Turenne caused serious uneasiness at Court. It was known there that this great General was listening to the solicitations of his brother, to lead back the army of Germany against Condé. It was also known that the Archduke Leopold, eagerly watching his opportunity to extort favourable conditions of peace for exhausted Spain, meditated marching a powerful force over the naked frontier. The investing body was not only insufficient to capture Paris, but was exposed to be overwhelmed by the converging attacks of superior armies. The angry clouds that hurried up in gathering ruin from every point of the political horizon made Cardinal Mazarin tremble for France; the hostile Decrees of so many of the great judicial bodies made him tremble for himself, and in his nightly conferences with his mistress, he was the strenuous advocate of peace. He represented to Anne of Austria that an implacable prosecution of hostilities would arm the Generals and demagogues of the capital with a pretext for crushing the loyal majority of the High Court, or forcing it into an alliance with Spain; would light up throughout the entire kingdom the flames of civil war, and must result

in delivering over the realm as a spoil to its foreign and domestic enemies, or in rendering the victorious Condé military dictator during the minority of her son. On the other hand, a temporary compliance with the demands of Molé and his party, demands more than once conceded, and which might be again revoked, would cut the ground from under the traitorous nobles and re-establish her authority upon the support of the Parliament. The prospect of seeing herself and her cherished minister at the mercy of her discarded friends, the "Importants," aided by the troops of her brother, or puppets of the imperious Condé, was intolerable to Anne of Austria. While she listened, half convinced, to Mazarin's counsels, a warning voice, eloquent in all the force of tragic experience, fell upon her ear. The unhappy Henrietta Maria, Queen of England, had remained behind in her cheerless solitude at the Louvre after the departure of the Court. One day, in the depth of the unusually severe winter, De Retz found her without food or fire, shivering by the bed-side of her daughter, who was unable to rise on account of the extreme cold. The sight of a great Queen, the daughter, sister, and aunt of a King of France, destitute of the necessities of life in the principal palace of her royal race,

touched the not ungenerous heart of the Coadjutor, and he obtained for her a liberal provision from the Parliament. Shortly afterwards the news of the judicial murder of her husband plunged the ill-fated lady in anguish and despair. In her desolation she implored her sister-in-law to be wise in time, and to beware of arousing, by arbitrary acts, the ferocious passions of an infuriated people.

The gravity of the situation also sobered Condé, hitherto the fiercest advocate of repression. He felt convinced that he had done enough to command the lasting gratitude of the Regent, who loaded him with marks of affection, constantly styling him her third son; and he was not insensible to the glory of again giving peace to France.

The result of this revulsion of feeling at St. Germain was, that the deliberations of the Coadjutor and his military allies were disturbed by the unwelcome intelligence that a royal herald, bearing letters for the High Court, had presented himself at the city gates and demanded audience. In the present temper of the citizens, the opening of communication between the Court and the Parliament was fraught with ruin to the personal projects of the insurgent leaders. De Retz, ever fertile in resource, hit upon an ingenious mode of averting the danger. He hinted to Broussel that

as heralds were sent only to sovereign princes and rebels, the present mission was a perfidious device of Cardinal Mazarin to entrap the Parliament into a confession of high treason. This plausible theory, greedily accepted and confidently expounded by Broussel and his democratic friends, had the expected effect of filling the majority of the magistrates with distrustful fears. But Molé adroitly foiled the Coadjutor with his own weapons. Acquiescing in the validity of the plea against receiving the King's missive, he carried a resolution that the law officers of the Crown should be deputed to St. Germain to explain to the Regent that jealous loyalty and not disrespect prompted the refusal. The Attorney-General, the eloquent and patriotic Omer Talon, and his colleagues, discharged their commission with zeal and prudence. Their excuses were graciously listened to by the Regent. They learned that the royal letter had only exacted the retirement of the Parliament for one day to Montargis, as the price of a general amnesty; and their rose-coloured pictures on their return of the benevolent dispositions of the Court, fostered the growing desire of peace.

A premature agreement between Anne of Austria and the Parliament of Paris, which left Mazarin Prime Minister of France, must topple down the ladder of intrigue which De Retz had

constructed with so much secret toil and skill to form his own ascent to power. The time was come when, in order to inspirit his partizans and to baffle the efforts of the peace party, it was necessary for him to play a bolder game; to unmask the deeper and more dangerous operations of his policy, to which the revolt of the Capital was meant to serve as an introduction. The civil war now passed into a graver and sterner phase. The laughable incidents and the gay frivolity, which had given it the character of a glittering comedy, disappeared. The splendid phantoms that had been paraded to attract the popular favour faded away into the background, and the interest centred in the real actors. The jealousy of the Prince of Marsillac had severed the intimate relations of Madame de Longueville with the Coadjutor—and shortly afterwards a dangerous wound, which the Prince received in a sally, bereft her also of his support. Nature had not formed her for the rough career of a revolutionary heroine. The Hotel Rambouillet, with its refined pleasures and its circle of brilliant adorers, was her proper sphere. The timid Conti, still less at ease amidst the rude familiarities and the violent passions of a Parisian mob, instead of being a prop, leant on her for protection. Chagrined and dispirited she retired into privacy; and the Hotel de Bouillon,

whither the Coadjutor repaired every day to confer with the Duke and his energetic wife, became the head quarters of the Fronde.

De Retz and Bouillon, by far the ablest men and the most sternly in earnest of the insurgent party, were thoroughly in accord as regarded the policy of overthrowing the existing Government. But their different political views and personal aims caused a divergence of opinion as to the means that should be adopted to accomplish this purpose. Bouillon opposed Cardinal Mazarin as the leading representative of a system which triumphed by his own abasement, and the abasement of his order. He sought to be re-established in his sovereign dignity, and his forfeited territory of Sedan, to aggrandize his family connexions, and, as a more remote object of desire, to restore the feudal power of the nobles. Contemning public rights, other than those of the higher orders of the realm, chafed by the pretensions of the Chambers, and by association with plebeian gownsmen, having no sympathy for the grievances of the Third Estate, he wished to coerce the Parliament and rule the Capital by the terror of organized mobs; to invite the Spanish army of Flanders to co-operate with the troops of Turenne, the provincial levies of the territorial magnates, and the Parisian forces in dictating terms to the Crown.

He had hitherto held himself aloof from active participation in the war, wrapping himself up in haughty isolation until the preparations of the Archduke, of Turenne, and of his aristocratic confederates were sufficiently matured to enable him to assume a position corresponding to his claims. He now proposed to cast aside the cause of the Parliament and the constitution of October as a worn-out garment, to crush the opposition of the loyal magistrates, and, strong in his potent alliances, to confront Anne of Austria as an equal competitor for the possession of France. The other Generals coincided in his views.

De Retz hated Mazarin as a personal rival. Having no longer any hope of supplanting his enemy in the favour of the Regent, he sought to drive him from the kingdom by the force of a popular movement deriving its sanction from the venerable authority of the Parliament, which would bear himself on its crest to the direction of affairs. In order to endue this movement with the power, energy, and prestige necessary to overturn a long-established and successful administration, he had drawn into it discontented ambitions of Princes of the Blood and feudal chiefs, which only partially approved themselves to his convictions; and he even desired the intervention of the Spaniards so far as it could be made subser-

vient to his main object. But it was counter to his views to destroy the authority of the great judicial body which was the chief pillar of his own ambition; which, by countenancing the revolt, raised it from a mere outbreak of faction into a patriotic assertion of national rights, clothed it with the strength of justice and legality, and enlisted in its support the active sympathies of the middle classes. It was equally contrary to his intentions, by any rash step, to place himself beyond the pale of Parliamentary protection, a safe object for the vengeance of the Regent. As wary as he was bold, he was the soul of the rebellion, and yet carefully guarded his own security.

He moved all the springs of the Fronde without letting his hand be too conspicuous. Through Beaufort he ruled the populace of Paris. Through Bouillon and the other Generals he guided the military operations and the Spanish intrigues. Through Broussel and other popular demagogues he swayed the deliberations of the Chambers. But while bringing all the moral influences he could command to inflame and extend the civil war, and to shape the action of the Parliament in a course of uncompromising resistance, he protected the magistrates from seditious violence, and regulated his steps by their decisions.

It was clear, however, to both of these ex-

perienced leaders, that unless the fainting spirits of the Parisians could be raised by an immediate prospect of external aid, the struggle against the Government must collapse. The great provincial nobles still required time to complete their armaments. Turenne, thwarted by the opposition of Baron d'Erlach, Colonel of the Swiss, had not yet ventured on a public declaration of his intentions. Alliance with Spain would be spurned by the Parliament with horror. But it occurred to the Coadjutor that it might be possible, by a surprise, to trick the High Court into an appearance of friendly communication with the Archduke Leopold, which, by feeding the war fever in the Capital, and by incensing the Regent, must cast new obstacles in the way of an accommodation.

The Archduke had recently accredited a skilful agent to De Retz and Bouillon, a monk named Arnulphini, furnished with a number of blank forms signed by Leopold, and with a formal letter of credence to the Duke of Elbœuf, to be used according as the two leading chiefs might see fit. This envoy, acting in concert with the Coadjutor, now assumed the name and garb of Don Joseph de Illescas, a Spanish cavalier, and presented the letter. Elbœuf, who was vain and presumptuous, received the Archduke's communication as a

flattering mark of distinction. With an air of mysterious importance, that was highly diverting to the contrivers of the intrigue, he invited his military colleagues and De Retz to a conference at his hotel, and introduced to them the pseudo ambassador. In the afternoon of the same day, the Prince of Conti announced, from his place in the Chamber, that the Archduke Leopold, having been offered most advantageous terms of peace by Cardinal Mazarin, who wished to have his hands free to oppress the Parliament, had not only refused to abet the designs of the proscribed minister, but had dispatched a special envoy to crave audience of the High Court. The Prince concluded by divulging the arrival of Don Joseph de Illescas, and proposing that he should at once be heard. The motion was listened to by the majority of the Chamber with alarm and indignation. The President de Mesmes, hurried away by patriotic anger, poured a torrent of invective upon the head of the unmoved Coadjutor. In the unguarded rush of his passion, he let fall a phrase which wounded the self-love of the magistrates. De Retz promptly interrupted his assailant, and in a happy retort carried the Chamber so completely with him, that the loyal majority, yielding to the clamour, reluctantly consented to grant the envoy audience.

Arnulphini immediately presented himself, fortified by credentials and letters, which De Retz had manufactured with the help of the Archduke's signatures. He informed the magistrates that his master, out of respect for their illustrious body, the legal depository of the royal authority during the minority of Louis XIV., had declined to countenance Cardinal Mazarin; that the Archduke was ready to treat for peace with France at any place the Parliament should appoint, and in the meantime placed twenty thousand troops at its service. Having finished his harangue, he delivered his letters, and by the order of the First President was conducted from the Chamber. By this time the cloud of passion which obscured the judgment of the assembly had passed away, and been followed by a re-action of patriotic fears. Molé, seeing his advantage, proposed that a deputation should carry the letters to St. Germain, and inform the Regent that the Parliament had not presumed to deliberate on, or even to open them without the royal permission. A decree to this effect passed without opposition, and the Coadjutor found his bold artifice foiled, a second time, by the calm decision of the First President.

The failure of this clever imposture exasperated the Generals. Bouillon urged the Coadjutor to excite a popular commotion, to arrest, and imprison

Molé, and the principal men of the hostile party, and to join in a letter demanding armed assistance from the King of Spain. But De Retz, knowing that the Spanish alliance was the rock upon which the most powerful confederacies against Richelieu had foundered, and that the destruction of the independence of the Parliament would be the shipwreck of his own fortunes, resolutely refused his assent. "All things," he said, "with the Parliament; nothing without it." The Generals, therefore, were obliged to restrict themselves to negotiating with the Court of Brussels, on their own responsibility, and to sending pressing messages to their provincial allies to hasten their movements.

The Coadjutor's stratagem, though baffled in the Chamber, was not without its effect at St. Germain. Anne of Austria, irritated by the public audience granted to her brother's envoy, listened to the explanations and excuses of Molé and his colleagues with impatience. The entreaties of the First President, seconded by the advice of Orleans, Condé, and Mazarin, wrung from her with difficulty a peevish consent to a conference, in which terms of agreement might be discussed. She privately made it an absolute condition that the Cardinal's position of Prime Minister should not be questioned. On the other hand, she pro-

mised to allow a daily supply of provisions to enter the Capital, where the populace, pinched by the approaches of famine, showed a disposition to repeat the revolutionary excesses of their fathers in the days of Bussy le Clerc and the "Sixteen." Armed with this concession, the First President returned to Paris, and treating with calm scorn the ferocious threats of the dregs of the population, who were subsidised by Bouillon, persuaded the High Court to accept the conference. The Generals again proposed to assassinate or seize him, and to kindle an insurrection; and again De Retz steadily withstood their pressure, and the more dangerous assaults of the Duchess of Bouillon.

The presidents Viole and Coigneux, leaders of the extreme party, were associated with Molé and De Mesmes to represent the Chamber at Ruel, the seat of the negotiations. The principal members of the Council of State attended on behalf of the Crown. But the conditions insisted on by the Regent were found to be as haughty and severe as if she were imposing the harsh law of the conqueror on prostrate rebels. They exacted the exile of the High Court to Montargis, and the suppression or curtailment of its newly acquired privileges. It was impossible for the magistrates to accept a humiliation which involved the sur-

render of the principles embodied in the Declaration of October. But Anne of Austria, jealous of the dignity of the Crown, and submitting with ill-humour to the temporising policy of her Council, could not be induced to relax her demands. The negotiations came to a dead-lock, and after many days of barren discussion it seemed as if the conference was about to terminate without result.

While the delegates were wasting their hours in fruitless debates, the course of events had wrought a complete change in the character and prospects of the Civil War and in the temper of the Capital. Turenne, crossing the Rhine at the head of his army, had issued a proclamation in which he assumed the title of Lieutenant-General of the King's army in the service of the Parliament, and had set out on his march for Paris. Before the citizens recovered from the first fever of joyful excitement into which this news had thrown them, messengers from Normandy announced the advance of the Duke of Longueville, with ten thousand men, on St. Germain, to capture the King and the Regent. Fast upon the heels of Longueville's couriers came others from the south to herald the arrival of a still more numerous force under the Duke of La Tremouille. A second agent, despatched by the Archduke Leopold, having concluded a secret treaty with the Generals,

the enterprising Marquis of Noirmoutier had departed for Brussels to hasten the invasion of the Spaniards. And in order better to co-operate with the movements of his allies, Bouillon led out fourteen thousand of the best of the Parisian troops to an entrenched camp at Villejuif, in the angle formed by the junction of the Seine and Marne—a position which Condé pronounced to be unassailable. The agitation of the populace rose to frenzy. The inflexible severity of the Regent, and the toleration extended to Cardinal Mazarin, alienated the middle classes. The party of the Coadjutor obtained the upper hand in the Chambers, and the Parliament resolved, by a large majority, to cancel the powers of its delegates, and recall them from Ruel.

The intelligence that reached him from the Capital filled the patriotic heart of Molé with grief for the calamities impending over the monarchy. An intercepted copy of the treaty concluded by Bouillon and his colleagues with the King of Spain, which was communicated to him by the Regent, excited in his breast poignant feelings of shame and indignation. He had, up to this time, scrupulously avoided any recognition of Cardinal Mazarin's presence at Ruel, but now all other considerations were lost in an over-mastering purpose to save the State from the machinations of traitors.

With his friend De Mesmes, who shared his views, he repaired at midnight to Mazarin's lodgings, and told the astonished Minister that, having received intimation that their commission would be revoked on the following day, they were prepared to risk their lives, and sign without further delay any treaty which he might dictate. It was for the Ministers' interest to grant such conditions as would justify their act to the Parliament, and enable them to defeat the practices of the confederate lords; but, whatever he might determine, their part was chosen. Mazarin, fully appreciating the peril of the situation and the magnanimity of the magistrates, summoned Orleans and Condé, and wrote out the draft of a new treaty. In whatever touched the dignity of the Crown this document was studiously exacting; but the concessions were as large as he could hope to extort from the Regent. The banishment of the Parliament to Montargis was commuted to a visit to St. Germain; its political discussions were subjected to a temporary restraint; the Government reserved to itself the right of borrowing money for its present necessities; but the Declaration of October the 24th was explicitly confirmed, and a general amnesty was guaranteed. With the draft in his pocket, the Cardinal started off for St. Germain, and after some hours returned with it, signed by

the Regent. Molé and De Mesmes wept for joy—and even Coigneux and Viole, scared by the Spanish treaty, affixed their names without hesitation. The signatures were scarcely dry when messengers arrived with the decree of the High Court annulling the powers of its representatives. Molé displayed the treaty in triumph, and returned to Paris, amidst the hootings and execrations of the rabble, conscious of his danger, and prepared to devote his life for his country.

The Parliament, though strongly adverse to a compromise with the Regent, which left Cardinal Mazarin at the helm of affairs, had adjourned in order to give its First President a hearing before coming to a decision. The Generals were determined to use all means to prevent the ratification of the treaty. At an early hour of the morning Paris exhibited all the signs of feverish agitation. The seditious cries and the lowering looks of the groups, restlessly forming and dissolving in the places of public resort, gave ominous presage of a political tempest. At seven o'clock the members of the High Court were in their places, and Molé read out the minutes of the proceedings at Ruel. The reading was frequently interrupted by angry cries and insolent comments, which swelled at its conclusion into a tumult of frantic denunciation. Conti rose, and in gentle tones reproached the

First President with perfidiously betraying the interests of the Generals, who were abandoned by the treaty to the vengeance of the outlawed Minister. Bouillon followed, saying curtly, that all he asked of the Chamber was a passport to quit the kingdom, since Mazarin was to be re-established in his abuse of the royal authority. The deafening clamour and the wild gesticulations which applauded this artful speech had only partially subsided, when a muffled roar, making itself audible above the din, announced the presence of an excited multitude in the Place de Greve. Conti, rising again, repeated his complaints against the First President for concluding a peace without his participation. Then Molé, unable longer to restrain his indignation, started to his feet with flashing eyes, and in a voice of thunder, which subdued the uproar, and arrested universal attention, addressed the Prince—"What, Sir," he exclaimed, "you ask why we concluded peace without your participation? We did so to circumvent the pernicious, traitorous, and murderous designs of yourself and your colleagues. While we were at Ruel," he continued, turning to the assembly, "our self-styled protectors were negotiating with the enemies of France. You," he said to Conti and Bouillon, "sent the Marquis of Noirmoutier to the Archduke. Your letters,

which we have read, summoned the Archduke to France, and delivered this fair realm to the ravages of a foreign enemy. You give us such allies without our consent. Can you wonder that we repudiate and resent such an indignity?" The Chamber listened spell-bound in incredulous amazement. "We took this step," faltered the disconcerted Conti, with white lips, "by the advice of certain members of this august Court." "Name them, name them," thundered Molé, "and we will arraign and sentence them as criminals guilty of high treason." His vehement words were echoed back by a storm of applause. The magistrates, revolting from their position of dishonoured dupes, gave free rein to their patriotic resentment. The treaty was about to be voted by acclamation, when a wild clamour of shrieks and yells resounded from the outer hall, and the terrified ushers, rushing into the Chamber, implored the Duke of Beaufort to come forth and address the mob. Armed ruffians, in Bouillon's pay, led on by a lawyer named Deboisle, had invaded the Palace of Justice, loudly demanding Molé's head.

Beaufort was instantly surrounded by a band of viragoes, bereft, by a life of lawless depravity, of all but the form of their sex, who insisted on tearing the First President limb from limb. While he held these furious women in

parley, the multitude behind burst open the side doors, and with horrible imprecations rushed into the galleries of the Chamber. Part of the balustrade, yielding to the pressure of the crowd, crashed down upon the trembling magistrates, and increased their terror and confusion. Molé alone remained calm and undaunted. "Never," says De Retz, "did I behold such sublime intrepidity as was displayed by M. Molé. Not a feature quivered, and he exhibited indomitable firmness, and presence of mind almost supernatural." The members gathered round their President, and implored him to quit the building by a door behind the throne, which gave access to his official residence. "The Court never hides itself," he replied. "If I knew that my death was certain, nothing should induce me to fly. Would not treason be encouraged? Would not the rabble seek me in my own house, if I was guilty of such cowardice?" And he strode forward proudly towards the grand entrance. De Retz, moved by generous admiration, threw himself in the President's path, and besought him at least to wait until he endeavoured to disperse the rioters. "Then, my good lord," said Molé, in bitter scorn, "speak the merciful word quickly." The Coadjutor, disregarding the injurious insinuation which, in the present instance, was undeserved, mounted

on a bench and harangued the rabble, but was answered with jeers and laughter, and discharges of musketry. He then went to seek Deboisle. Molé, disdaining even the appearance of hesitation, refused to tarry longer, and advanced with a few faithful friends to the head of the principal stair-case. De Retz flew to his side, and Bouillon, ashamed and alarmed at the excesses of his partizans, followed the Archbishop's example. The mob, drunk with fury, set upon them with indiscriminating violence. Bouillon was felled to the ground and trampled under foot by his own adherents. De Retz, in warding off a dagger-thrust from the President's breast, was wounded in the hand. A ruffian put a loaded musket to Molé's head. "When you have killed me," said the illustrious magistrate, with unflinching composure, "I shall only need six feet of earth!" His undaunted bearing and noble presence struck even the frenzied wretches, who thirsted for his blood, with awe. Despite themselves, they allowed him to descend the steps; his friends placed him in the carriage of one of the Generals, and he reached his house in safety.

Early on the following morning Molé was again in his place, with the treaty of Ruel in his hand. The terrible scene of the previous day had left a vivid impression of horror on the minds, even of his

opponents in the Chamber. Conti, under whose superior rank his colleagues had sheltered themselves, sick from fright, was unable to leave his bed. The other Generals earnestly deprecated a renewal of mob violence, and declared their desire to use only the weapons of legitimate argument; and the Provost of Paris mustered the Burgher Guard to protect the deliberations of the High Court. In an able speech, Bouillon vaunted the overwhelming military strength of the confederacy, pledged himself to raise the siege of Paris, and to expel Mazarin from France. But the alarm inspired by the Spanish treaty lent irresistible weight to the eloquence of Molé. The Chamber struck out the humiliating clause which imposed on it a penitential journey to St. Germain, and whatever else infringed the rights conceded by the Declaration of October, but accepted the remainder of the treaty by a large majority. The First President was again deputed to obtain the Regent's assent to the required modifications.

No intelligence from Viscount Turenne had reached Paris for several days. The uncertainty that rested on his movements determined the military chiefs not to throw away an opportunity of serving their interests by peaceful negotiations with the Regent; accordingly they sent, through Molé, a formidable schedule of demands for them-

selves and their friends. Anne of Austria glanced scornfully over this huge catalogue of exactions, which implied a complete change in the distribution of political power, and then threw it aside, as if for future consideration. But a third envoy from the Archduke arriving with intelligence that ten thousand Spaniards had entered Champagne, the Generals resumed their defiant attitude; the High Court again resounded with denunciations of Cardinal Mazarin; and his imputed vices were publicly scourged in fresh lampoons impregnated to the highest point with virulence and wit. The renewed confidence of the war party was unexpectedly dashed, however, by a piece of news which reached the Hotel Bouillon while De Retz and the Spanish envoy were dining, in high spirits, with the Duke and Duchess.

When Turenne's ambiguous proceedings first awakened the suspicions of the Government, the Cardinal had secretly sent a large sum of money and the commission of General to the Baron d'Erlach, with instructions to frustrate any treasonable practices on the part of his superior officer, by discharging the arrears of pay due to the troops, and assuming the supreme command. These precautionary measures proved the salvation of the Government. The army, which was mainly composed of German mercenaries, won over by the

golden arguments of d'Erlach, declared, after a few marches on the French territory, for the Regent and Condé. Turenne, abandoned by all except a few personal attendants, narrowly escaped arrest by a precipitate flight into Germany. The Spanish force ravaging Champagne, on hearing of this defection, beat a rapid retreat into Flanders.

The game of the Fronde was evidently played out for the present. Baffled and isolated, the confederate lords were under the necessity of acquiescing, with what grace they might, in the restoration of tranquillity. Bouillon, in announcing to the Parliament the failure of his hopes, declared, with some dignity, on behalf of the Generals, that their demands upon the crown were prompted by the necessity of protecting themselves against Cardinal Mazarin, and that they were ready to relinquish all personal claims, if the banished minister retired from France. Notwithstanding this show of disinterestedness, the Cardinal found them all eager to engage in his favourite political game of secret intrigue and corruption. He carried on a separate negotiation with Conti and Madame de Longueville, with Bouillon, and with Madame de Montbazon, who still, in spite of time and absence, reigned without a rival over the heart of the Duke of Beaufort. The noble character and devoted loyalty of Molé gave just

weight to his counsels, and he succeeded in persuading the Regent to ratify the treaty of Ruel, as modified by the Parliament. The leaders of the feudal party availed themselves of the amnesty, and, with the exception of Beaufort, presented themselves at court to make their submission. Out of consideration for Condé, Conti obtained the stronghold of Damvilliers in his Government of Champagne, with Marsillac for Lieutenant, enjoying the emoluments; and Longueville was promised possession of Pont de l'Arche, the key of Normandy. Bouillon, the most dangerous conspirator and the deepest in guilt, had to content himself with a vague assurance that his claims would be examined at some future time. Madame de Montbazon, whose greed was insatiable in ministering to her luxurious pleasures, was propitiated by the gift of a large sum of money; and some favours were conferred on Noirmoutier and other staunch partizans of De Retz. The Coadjutor shaped his own course with his usual judgment. The prudence and foresight which had preserved him from the formal guilt of high treason, saved him now from the humiliation of a public act of submission. He retired to the privacy of his palace, with the declared intention of occupying himself exclusively with his episcopal duties; and although he sent to the Regent loyal

assurances of his unalterable devotion, he declined to visit the Court, or in any way to recognise Mazarin as Prime Minister. By this line of conduct he maintained his credit with the Parisians, and avoided compromising his political aims.

In the beginning of April peace was proclaimed in the Capital; the armies of the Fronde were disbanded; and affairs appeared to resume their normal condition. But the fierce animosities from which the conflict had sprung, and those which it had engendered, though smothered, were scarcely allayed. Society was still agitated by the after-swell of the revolutionary storm. Anne of Austria, mortified at the failure of her policy, distrustful of the temper of the citizens, and deeply galled by the insults and the defiance so freely flung at herself and her cherished minister, refused to enter the impenitent city, and swept by it with her whole Court to pass the summer at Compiègne.

END OF VOL. I.

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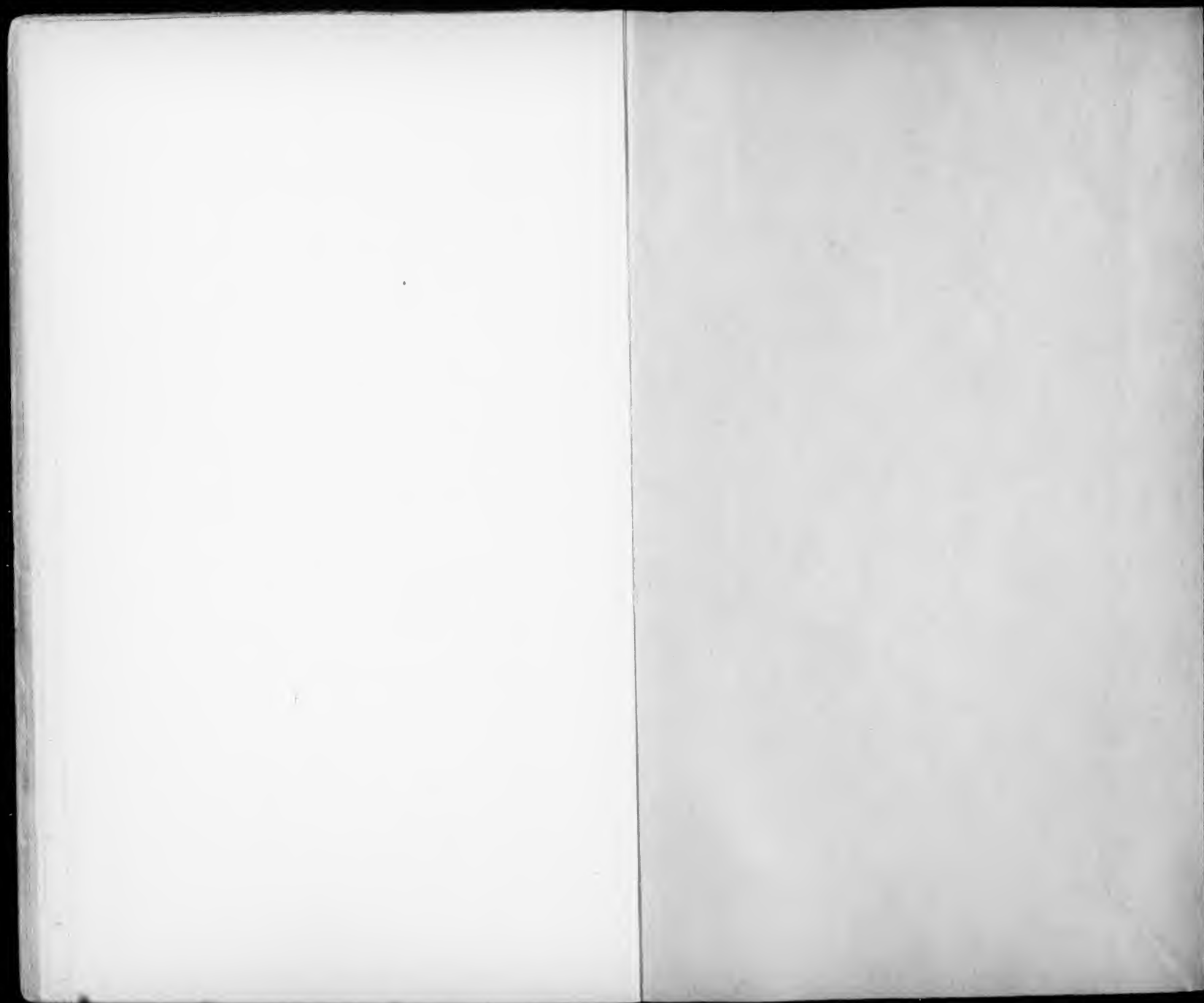
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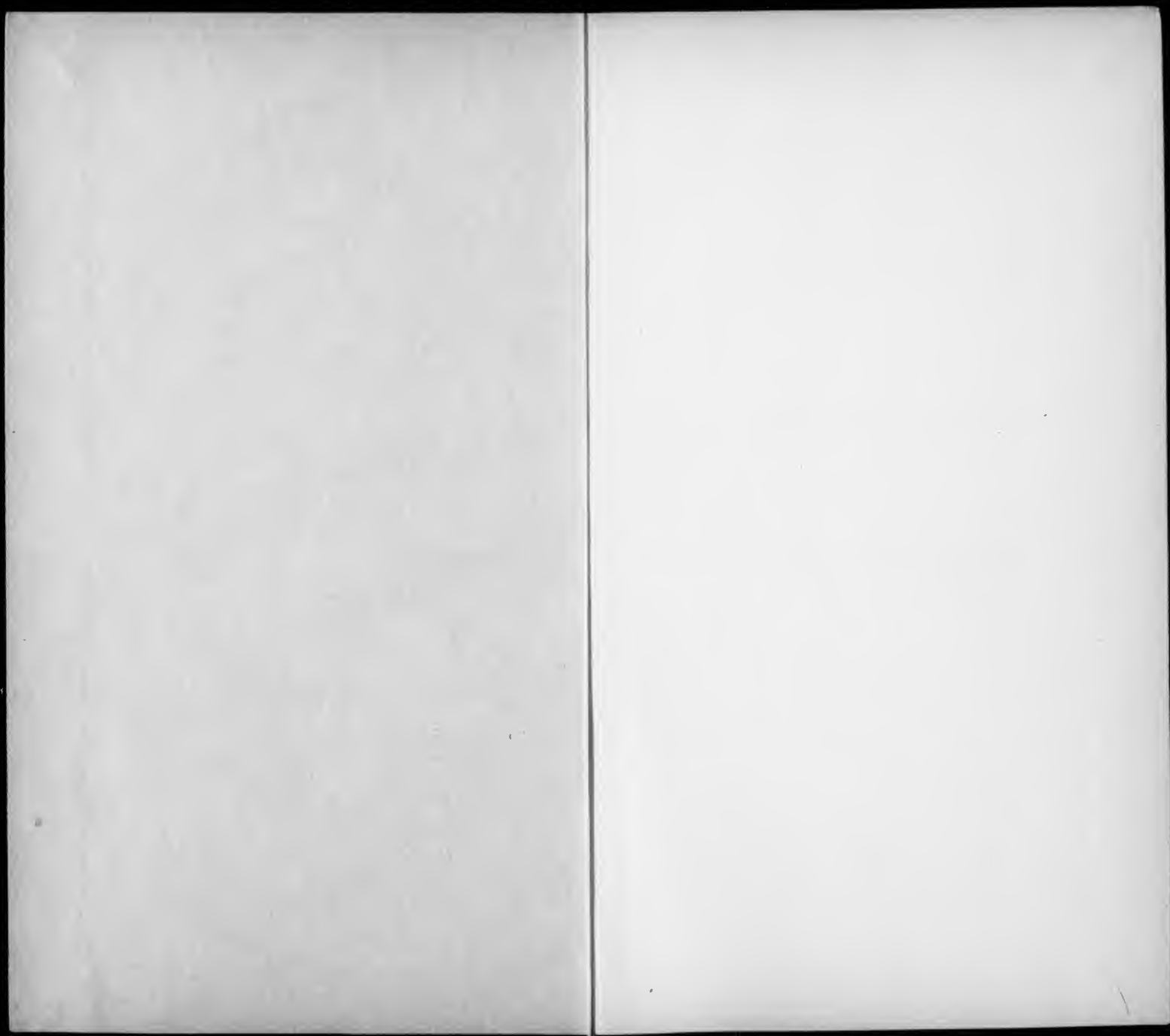
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THE GREAT CONDÉ

AND

THE PERIOD OF THE FRONDE.

THE GREAT CONDÉ

AND

THE PERIOD OF THE FRONDE.

A HISTORICAL SKETCH.

BY

WALTER FITZ PATRICK.

VOL. II.

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## THE GREAT CONDÉ AND THE PERIOD OF THE FRONDE.

### CHAPTER I.

AMIDST the majestic solitudes and the sylvan pleasures of her delightful retreat, Anne of Austria found grateful repose from the fierce strife in which the preceding twelve months of her Regency had been passed. The Court was joyous and brilliant; the beauty, accomplishments, and modest graces of Mazarin's eldest nieces, Laura Mancini and the Countess Martinozzi, who appeared for the first time as members of the Queen's circle, brightened it with charms which owed nothing of their lustre to meretricious art. The amnesty stipulated in the treaty of Ruel, by re-opening France to illustrious exiles of the high

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nobility, gave additional splendour to the royal retinue. The Duke of Vendôme, returning from his long sojourn in Italy, repaired to Compeigne with his eldest son, the Duke of Mercœur; and even Madame de Chevreuse, notwithstanding her recent treason at Brussels, ventured back to her beloved Paris. Anne of Austria, incensed by a step which she regarded as a new act of defiance, ordered the Duchess to quit the kingdom. But the mandate was almost immediately revoked in deference to the remonstrances of the First President Molé; and the Regent, softened by a penitent letter of submission, allowed her old friend to reappear at Court, and even to resume some of the privileges of a favourite.

The tranquillity of Compeigne, however, was soon disturbed by the breaking out of dissensions between Condé and the Cardinal. The Prince had naturally expected that his birth, his genius, and the great services he had rendered the Crown, would entitle him to the lead in the Council of State. But he found, to his indignation and disgust, that, peace being re-established, he was reduced to play a part subordinate to that of the Minister. The popular sarcasm, which designated him Mazarin's Captain of the Guard, cut him to the quick, and an event occurred which blew up

into a fierce blaze the smouldering fire of his jealous resentment. The Duke of Vendôme, a cowardly and incapable Prince, pining for the sunshine of Court favour, from which he had been so long banished, proposed a marriage between his eldest son and Laura Mancini. Mazarin eagerly grasped at an illustrious alliance which had long been floating in his ambitious dreams. Mercœur fell captive to the charms of the beautiful Italian. The Regent warmly promoted the match; and the Cardinal's dower to his niece, the post of High Admiral of France for Vendôme, with succession to his son, and an enormous sum of money, was not unworthy the rank of her intended husband. But the House of Vendôme, the fruit of Henry IV.'s amour with Gabrielle d'Estrées, and exalted by the prodigal favour of its progenitor to an equal footing with the legitimate Princes of the Blood, had always been regarded by these, and especially by the Condé family, with scorn and hatred. The great dignity which the Regent was now about to confer on its inglorious chief, out of complaisance for her Minister, she had frequently refused to the brilliant services of the Prince; and he thought he discerned a perfidious design, on the part of the Court, to depress his power, and to restore, at the expense of his

just claims, the fallen greatness of a rival family. The Dowager Princess, after the peace of Ruel, had reconciled her children. Madame de Longueville had recovered her hold upon the affections of her fiery brother. Smarting under the cutting disdain with which the Regent had received her at St. Germain, the Duchess now worked so artfully upon Condé's passions, that, giving free rein to his wrath, he publicly denounced the marriage, and all who were in any way parties to it, in outrageous terms of menace and insult. And although the alarmed Minister pretended to abandon the project of alliance with Vendôme, his haughty protector quitted Compeigne in high dudgeon, and retired to his Government of Burgundy.

Condé's departure left in the mind of the Regent a sense of inexpressible relief, but the position of public affairs made his support indispensable to the Government. The state of the Capital was far from satisfactory. The well-disposed inhabitants mourned the depression of trade, and the desolate aspect of deserted palaces and mansions; the evil-disposed saw with regret that the Regent and her Minister were beyond their reach. De Retz, Beaufort, and their partizans fomented the general discontent. The Cardinal was again freely assailed in the Chambers, and in

virulent brochures. The Duke of Orleans returned to the Luxembourg amidst extravagant demonstrations of popular delight. Vast multitudes thronged forth to meet him, weeping with joy, and pressing eagerly to kiss his feet; and all the public bodies came to offer him their homage. Condé paid a flying visit to the Capital, and although he had found a malicious pleasure in spreading the belief that it was his habit, during the war, to feast on the ears of the fat burghers he had killed or taken, his dauntless bearing as he traversed, unattended, the crowded thoroughfares, elicited applause. But an empty coach bearing Mazarin's arms, sent into the city to test the temper of the population, was smashed to pieces by the mob; and some of the Regent's servants who ventured to show themselves in the streets, in the royal liveries, were cruelly beaten. Anne of Austria, naturally incensed by these evidences of hostile feeling, gave ungracious answers to the deputations that arrived from Paris, in rapid succession, to entreat her to return. The pressure, however, of financial difficulties, which the Parliament refused to consider during the absence of the Court, and the re-appearance of Condé at Compeigne in an amiable mood, after a time, rendered her more compliant. The Prince,

appeased by the Minister's submission, and disliking the principles, the tactics, and the chief heroes of the Fronde, pledged himself to conduct the Court in safety to the Palais Royal.

Under his protection the King, the Regent, and the Cardinal set out from Compeigne in the middle of a sultry August. Through one of those sudden revolutions of public feeling, which have made the fickleness of the French people proverbial, their entry into the Capital was an extraordinary triumph. The loyal enthusiasm of the citizens was only equalled by their considerate delicacy. Everything that could suggest the slightest recollection of past troubles, even the chains which at that time guarded the entrances of the streets, were carefully removed from view. Strangest of all, Cardinal Mazarin, whom every day for years the Parisians had loaded with curses and insults, found himself, as he sat at one of the doors of the King's coach, a popular idol. Wherever he passed he heard nothing except the language of adulation. The sinister-looking outlaws of society, who herded in the foul dens in the neighbourhood of Notre Dame, proved false to their Archbishop; the fish hags were unfaithful to Beaufort in their clamorous admiration of the handsome Cardinal. At the opposite door of the coach Condé sat, with

iron countenance, noting the capricious humour of the rabble in silent disdain. The evening was far advanced before a slow progress of many hours in the stifling heat, through the choked streets, brought the Sovereigns to the Palais Royal. The noble halls of Richelieu blazed with light, and were thronged to suffocation by every person of eminence, Mazarinist or Frondeur, in Paris. Even De Retz and Beaufort, borne along in spite of themselves by the rushing tide of loyal re-action, were there to offer reluctant homage. In the view of this splendid assembly, Anne of Austria, radiant with joy, turned to Condé with tearful eyes, and pledged her eternal gratitude for the services he had rendered the King. So strong did she feel herself, in the overwhelming revulsion of popular favour, that she proffered De Retz the option of resigning his Coadjutorship or paying a visit of reconciliation to the Cardinal. The discomfited prelate—on whom vexation at the surprising turn of affairs brought a serious illness—bowed before the storm, had a most affectionate conference with his complacent rival, and then retired to the precincts of Notre Dame to watch warily, until the rapid mutation of public feeling offered another opportunity of hurling him from power.

Condé was now Arbiter of France. His position was such; so favourable a concurrence of circumstances seconded his ambition, that had he used his advantages with ordinary wisdom his power might have become as stable as it was vast. In re-establishing the Court at the Palais Royal, he had redeemed his pledges to the Regent, and was now free to pursue an independent course. His reconciliation with his sister secured to him the undivided allegiance of all the members and connexions of his family, and enlisted in his personal interests Bouillon, Turenne (whom he compelled the Regent to pardon), Marsillac, and other powerful chiefs of the feudal party. He held in his hands the balance between the contending factions in the State, and it was evident to all that the scale into which he threw his sword must preponderate.

To the Government his support was absolutely essential in the dangers that beset it. The exuberant loyalty that greeted the return of the sovereigns to Paris seemed to have evaporated in the heat and tumult of the long summer day. Madame de Chevreuse, rendered prudent by reverses, but still preserving her political fire and address, had infused new life into the Fronde, and brought it under the control of her intriguing

spirit. Weaving her spells around the feeble mind of Orleans, she gradually detached him from Anne of Austria; while the witcheries of her beautiful and profligate daughter held fast the Coadjutor in amorous toils. The defection of the Lieutenant-General could only be supplied by a firm alliance with Condé; and had the Prince, following in the footsteps of his father, steadily sustained the Regent and her Minister, there was hardly any concession which he might not have obtained from their gratitude or necessities.

It was also open to him, by taking his stand with Molé on the Declaration of the 24th of October, to which he had twice given his sanction, to become the guardian of good government, and public rights, against the excesses of authority and of faction; and, discarding mere personal or party aims, to guide the destinies in serving the highest interests of France. This would have been the course most consonant with his glory, his dignity, and an enlightened appreciation of his own advantage.

It was possible for him, as a third alternative, to drive Cardinal Mazarin from the kingdom, and boldly to seize the reins of Government. This was the course urged upon him by De Retz. Any one of the three lines of policy,

resolutely and consistently pursued, must almost certainly have insured to him for many years a commanding position in the State. But his career offers a memorable example of the pernicious effect of early and dazzling success, even upon a nature endowed with noble qualities, and with the rarest intellectual faculties. His splendid genius, gifted with such unerring vision, so fruitful of rapid and daring combinations in war, seemed bewildered and stricken with sterility in the strife of politics. It became the sport of his capricious passions and wayward impulses; equally bereft of the vivifying light of patriotic principles, and of the resolute sagacity to shape out and pursue a line of vulgar ambition. Listening now to his sister and De Retz, now to the Regent, he veered about a hundred times in a day, in a state of perplexity and vacillation that amused and astonished friends and foes.

Madame de Longueville was unwearied in her efforts to draw him over to the Fronde. She artfully induced him to test the sincerity of the Regent's professions by claiming the fulfilment of a promise, made after the treaty of Ruel, to hand over Pont de l'Arche, the key of Normandy, to his brother-in-law. Anne of Austria and Mazarin both declined to surrender this stronghold to the

Governor of the province, for reasons of State. The Prince pressed his suit with violence, and at length, exasperated by repeated refusals, grossly insulted the Cardinal. At the conclusion of a stormy interview, he shook his fist in the Minister's face, gave him a fillip on the cheek, and rushed from the room shouting, with ironical laughter, "Adieu, Mars." Intelligence of this unseemly quarrel soon reached the Coadjutor, exalting him on the wings of hope to the pinnacle of triumphant ambition. The darling scheme, over which he had long brooded, of a coalition of great nobles and popular magistrates, headed by the hero of Rocroi and Lens against his Italian rival, was about at length to assume shape and consistency. Hastening to the Hotel de Condé he offered the Prince the support of the Fronde, and was received with open arms. The great majority of the nobles thronged to range themselves under the most brilliant warrior of the age; and Orleans, wheedled by Madame de Chevreuse, gave a feeble countenance to the new confederacy. Mazarin's downfall seemed assured. The Palais Royal was deserted, and the Regent was devoured by vexation and resentment. But she knew the Prince better than he knew himself, and, fortified by a deep purpose of ultimately vindicating the royal

authority, she had the art to dissemble the hatred with which his conduct inspired her. Sending for the Duke of Orleans, she commissioned him to offer Condé Pont de l'Arche for his brother-in-law, and to propose a conference for the complete arrangement of the Prince's differences with her Minister.

Condé had already committed himself to the Coadjutor, and had allowed the Prelate to compromise himself and his friends by a hostile attitude towards the Government. But his pride was soothed by the submission of Anne of Austria and the penitent pleadings of the Cardinal; and his instinctive aversion from the Fronde, a conspiracy, as he termed it, of "petticoats and alcoves," was not lessened by familiar intercourse with its chiefs. Without consulting his new allies, or paying the slightest regard to their interests, he closed with the offers of the Regent. Lenet, a councillor of the Parliament of Dijon, the able and faithful partizan of the House of Condé, and La Riviere, as representative of the Duke of Orleans, who had assumed the office of mediator, conducted the negotiations with Mazarin, who was not in a position to resist any demand. In a few hours a secret treaty was drawn up and signed by the Regent, Condé,

Mazarin, and La Riviere. In consideration of frank and thorough co-operation with the Court, the Prince was not only invested with the entire control and patronage of the army, but was accorded a veto on all civil or ecclesiastical appointments, and on the matrimonial alliances which the Cardinal might desire for his nieces. The conditions of this agreement were carefully concealed from Orleans, whose military functions as Lieutenant-General of the kingdom it transferred to his cousin; La Riviere, in his anxiety to secure for himself the next nomination of the Crown to a seat in the conclave, not having scrupled to betray the interests of his too-confiding master. When De Retz and the Marquis of Noirmoutier, arrived by appointment at the Hotel de Condé to exchange, on the part of the Fronde, the formal ratifications of its new alliance with the Prince, they gathered with dismay, from his embarrassed apologies, that he had used them to serve his ends and then abandoned them. Madame de Longueville, notwithstanding the cession of Pont de l'Arche to her husband, did not spare angry reproaches for the inconstancy of her brother. Her disappointment, however, passed like a summer cloud over their affectionate relations. But although the Coadjutor and his

friends professed to rejoice at having been instrumental in obtaining for Condé satisfaction for his grievances, a bitter sense of having been duped and cast aside rankled in their minds, and prepared a signal retribution for his perfidy.

Anne of Austria had thus, by humiliating sacrifices, dissolved the only combination she would have been unable to resist. But she found Condé's friendship the most intolerable oppression. His exactions for himself or his adherents threatened to reduce the power of the Crown to the merest shadow. And his exactions were less offensive than the manner in which he enforced them. His temper, naturally aspiring and haughty, had become inflamed by uninterrupted prosperity to an extravagant pitch of pride; and the unbridled arrogance that found a distempered delight in provoking quarrels, raised up enemies against him in every quarter. The Prince of Marsillac having taken a fancy to claim the privilege of a tabouret at Court for his wife—perhaps in order to make amends to her for his infidelities—Condé supported his pretensions with such overbearing vehemence that the great body of the nobles, throwing themselves into the question of a petty distinction with as much ardour as if the very existence of their order was at stake, protested

against the claim in tumultuous meetings, which became a serious peril to the Government. Some deputies despatched by the Parliament of Bordeaux to complain of the unjust proceedings of the Duke of Epernon, using some expression that grated on Condé's ear, he threatened to cane them to death. To the Parliament and people he represented the imperious insolence of military force. In the mere wantonness of his presumptuous humour, he planted in Anne of Austria's own bosom the sting of an insult which it would be hardly in the nature of the meekest and lowliest of women to forgive.

The Regent still retained much of her old fondness for admiration, and the younger courtiers were accustomed to do homage to her beauty in piteous sighs, and in poetic effusions breathing the ardour of a consuming passion discreetly tempered by despair. One of the wits most in her favour, the little Marquis of Jarzé, half-crazed by vanity and the approving smiles with which his mistress rewarded his sallies, conceived the idea that she was in love with him. Revealing his good fortune in confidence to Condé, he offered to supplant Mazarin in return for the Prince's friendship. Condé, though highly amused at the little Marquis's self-conceit, promised secrecy, and accepted his services; and then, impelled by the spirit of

mischievous which possessed him at this period; publicly flouted the Cardinal upon the subject of the Regent's inconstancy. Anne of Austria at first treated the matter with ridicule. At length, irritated by her Minister's evident discomposure, and by the irreverent jests of his tormentor, she drove her infatuated adorer from her presence, with opprobrious epithets that made his blood tingle with shame, and deprived him of his lucrative appointment of captain of her guards. The crestfallen Jarzé resorted for consolation to Condé, who, after laughing heartily at his victim's discomfiture, had the audacity to pass on the Regent the unpardonable affront of insisting that her discarded admirer should be reinstated in his post.

Mazarin was the favourite butt of Condé's biting sarcasms, the object on which he never tired heaping contumely. The wily Italian, in whom the meekness of the dove was tinged in no inconsiderable degree with the guile of the serpent, bore the scoffs and jeers of the Prince with well-simulated patience. Nevertheless he was secretly contriving a terrible revenge. The Regent and he were goaded by indignities, and even by the instinct of self-preservation, to crush their tyrant. A necessary step towards this end was to isolate the Prince completely, and particu-

larly to raise up an impassable barrier between him and the Fronde. They were seasonably aided in their designs by one of those extraordinary impostures characteristic of the time, which nearly all sprang in grotesque completeness from the teeming brain of the Coadjutor.

After the peace of Ruel the Government, with the consent of the Parliament, had declared itself bankrupt, and postponed, for a year, payment of the interest on a loan which had been chiefly subscribed by the citizens of Paris. The fundholders submitted murmuringly; but the Government breaking faith with them again, when the deferred payments fell due, they were loud in their complaints, and elected representatives, who were termed Syndics, to press their claims. The most notable of the Syndics was Guy Joly, an intimate friend of De Retz, a physician, wit, and demagogue, whose amusing memoirs, erudite and flip-pant, reveal much of the secret intrigue, and reflect in vivid colours the popular feeling of the time. The Coadjutor, eager to embarrass the Court and Molé, who now strenuously laboured to smooth the difficulties of the Administration, fomented the rising sedition. In order to rouse the people to arms, he concocted an impudent plot in which

Joly was the chief actor. The Syndic, attired in a coat thickly padded and tested to be bullet-proof, came forth for an airing on Cours la Reine, the fashionable promenade. A pistol shot was fired into his coach; but a party of his friends, who, by a fortunate coincidence, were at hand, rushed to his rescue; and a wound on his shoulder, which had been carefully inflicted the day before, was dressed by a sympathising surgeon. In a few hours all Paris rang with the narrow escape of their champion from the assassins of the Court, and the public excitement was at fever heat. Mazarin promptly saw and seized the opportunity of turning the delusion of the citizens to advantage.

The Regent informed Condé, with looks and tones betraying grave anxiety, that the Cardinal had received intelligence of a conspiracy to murder him, as he went to sup with the Duke of Grammont, in revenge for the attack on the Syndic. The Prince, always brave, even to rashness, declared his resolution to face the danger. Yielding, however, to Anne's entreaties, he agreed to prove it by sending his coach with the blinds drawn down, but accompanied by his usual retinue, across the Pont Neuf. When the equipage appeared on the bridge, the Marquis of Bouillaye, quondam

General of the Cavalry of the *portes cochères*, still in outward seeming a noisy Frondeur, in reality a secret agent of Mazarin, galloping up with an armed band, searched it, killed one of the attendants, and then fled the kingdom. While the Prince's mind was a prey to the angry suspicions suggested by the antecedents of the mad-cap Marquis, the Cardinal produced fabricated evidence that Bouillaye had been the instrument of De Retz and Beaufort. Condé fell blindly into the snare. Spurning the repeated solicitations of the malignant noblemen for a hearing in their own defence, he preferred against them, in the High Court, a charge of assassination, which the law officers of the Crown had instructions to press. Political morality was at so low an ebb that the accusation obtained general credence. The adherents of the accused, dismayed by the fierce wrath of the Prince, and the alleged strength of the proofs in possession of the Government, fell from them. Beaufort, in despair, proposed to fly from Paris; but the Coadjutor, whose clear intellect was never clouded by fear, attended in his place to confront his traducers. He found himself shunned by all as if he were stricken with the plague; but he was sustained, not only by the consciousness of innocence, but by the possession

of a document secretly forwarded to him, as he afterwards discovered, by order of the Regent, which set forth, not only the heads of the indictment about to be laid by the Attorney General, but also the nature of the evidence on which it rested. To the unscrupulous state-craft of Mazarin, France owed the organization of a body of official spies, a baneful legacy of his rule, which long remained an odious feature in the system of French police. These spies were wretches convicted of the most atrocious crimes, to whom immunity and protection were guaranteed in return for infamous services. Some of them now were the witnesses for the Crown. When De Retz, with the rhetorical skill of which he was a master, exposed the inherent improbabilities of the alleged conspiracy, and then sketched the past lives and present functions of the miscreants, stained with the darkest hues of guilt, upon whose unsupported testimony it was sought to convict the Coadjutor Archbishop of Paris, and the grandson of Henry IV., of a detestable crime, indignation and amazement seized the Chamber. A unanimous decree of acquittal was only averted by the declarations of the First President and the law officers that more trustworthy evidence was forthcoming.

Condé was as much taken aback as any one by the revelations reflecting on the character of the Crown witnesses. False pride, however, impelled him to pursue his suit, although he showed his sense of its injustice by offering, if the Coadjutor would, as a mark of deference to him, retire from Paris for three months, to acknowledge the prelate's innocence. But De Retz, now zealously championed by the whole force of the Fronde, flung back insult for insult, and defiance for defiance; and the rage of the hostile factions threatened every moment to deluge Paris with blood. While Condé, delivered up by his headstrong passions, a helpless victim to Mazarin's craft, opened an impassable gulf of hatred between himself and the Fronde, he continued with reckless arrogance to provoke the vengeance of the Court. At the moment when his quarrel with the Coadjutor and Beaufort was charged with the deadliest rancour, a daring outrage upon the royal authority filled up to overflowing the measure of his offences against the Regent.

The most splendid prize in the matrimonial market of France, at this time, was the Duke of Richelieu, the grand nephew and inheritor of the peerage and the enormous wealth of the Great Minister; a timid, impressionable youth of nine-

teen or twenty, who lived at Ruel under the strict tutelage of his strong-willed aunt, the Duchess of Aiguillon. The Duchess, although of irreproachable life herself, had affianced her ward to Mademoiselle de Chevreuse. Among her most intimate friends was Madame de Pons, a clever and charming widow of thirty, sister to Mdlle. Vigean, who had been the object and victim of Condé's capricious fancy. The irregular features and the bewitching graces of person and manner of Madame de Pons were happily signified in her soubriquet of the "ugly Venus." The young Duke found himself enslaved by the covert arts of this fascinating widow; but the reverential awe with which he regarded his aunt, and the circumstance that her consent and that of the Regent were necessary for the validity of a marriage, seemed to oppose an insuperable barrier to the wishes of the lovers. In this difficulty Madame de Pons had recourse to the Duchess of Longueville. Of the numerous dignities bequeathed by the late Cardinal to his nephew the most important was that of Governor of Havre de Grace, the strongest fortress in France. As it was of the highest moment to the House of Condé that this great stronghold should pass from the keeping of the Duchess of Aiguillon, a devoted

servant of the Regent, to the keeping of one of its own adherents, Madame de Longueville warmly espoused the projects of her friend. At her instigation, Condé invited his young kinsman to pass the day with him at a country house near Paris. Madame de Pons happening, by the merest accident, to arrive there at the same time, the authority of the Prince, who took the whole responsibility on himself, and the charms of his mistress, overcame Richelieu's scruples. The marriage was celebrated by Condé's private chaplain, and the newly wedded pair started off, without a moment's delay, to take possession of Havre. Condé also despatched an officer of his own to the same destination, with instructions, should any messenger of the Regent, outstripping the dilatory progress of the lovers, reach the fortress before them, to fling him into the sea and burn his despatches.

The same afternoon the Prince returned to Paris, and afterwards presented himself, beaming with self-satisfaction, at the Regent's evening levée. Anne of Austria was already aware of his morning's work, Richelieu having snatched a moment to write a few penitent lines to his aunt. Smothering her resentment, she coldly remarked to the Prince, that the marriage would probably be annulled on account of its illegality.

He replied, insolently, that a marriage contracted in his presence was indissoluble. Anne then retired to her little grey chamber, consumed by vexation. As she sat brooding over the means of delivering herself from the daily humiliations that stung her proud spirit to madness, Madame d'Aiguillon rushed into the room, and flinging herself at her feet implored justice. Shortly afterwards Madame de Chevreuse arrived, and, with flashing eyes, demanded vengeance for the injury offered to her daughter. The two ladies urged the Regent to arrest Condé, and Madame de Chevreuse tendered the vigorous support of the Fronde. The practicability of freeing themselves from the yoke of their tyrant, by means of an alliance with the Coadjutor and his party, had of late been anxiously pondered by the Regent and Cardinal Mazarin. Anne, therefore, joyfully grasped at the offer of her old friend, and intrusted her with a note inviting De Retz to a secret interview. On the following night the Coadjutor, in the dress of a cavalier, was introduced into the Palace by a private entrance, and remained closeted for some hours with the Regent and the Cardinal. The fiery prelate panted for revenge on the false friend who assailed his honour and his life with such unjust virulence. But his passions

did not render him forgetful of his own interests, or those of his friends. A Cardinal's hat for himself, the post of High Admiral of France for the Duke of Vendôme, with the reversion to the Duke of Beaufort, the restoration of Madame de Chevreuse's old lover Chateauneuf to his forfeited office of Keeper of the Seals, a large sum of money for the ever-needy Madame de Montbazon, and other favours for less prominent adherents of the Fronde, were gladly conceded as the price of his assistance. On these terms he pledged to the Regent his loyal co-operation with Mazarin for the overthrow of their common oppressor.

To accomplish this aim in safety required all the skill of the two deepest political schemers of the age. The great power of Condé, who governed by himself or his adherents one-half of France, and who possessed the entire control of the army; the dazzling prestige that invested him; the vast following of young nobles, whose swords were ever ready to leap forth in defence of their heroic chief; and his own daring genius, which, always at the touch of danger, flashed out in its native splendour, rendered their enterprise one of extraordinary danger. Night after night the Coadjutor went to the Palais Royal in disguise, to

confer with the Minister. More than one warning of these mysterious meetings, veiled though they were by ingenious precautions, reached the Prince. But his haughty confidence in himself, his profound contempt for Mazarin, and the impenetrable duplicity of the Cardinal, effectually blinded him to his peril. Besides, he had taken measures which he considered sufficient to render him secure of timely information, in the event of the Court meditating any serious project against his liberty. He knew that the Regent could not venture to arrest him without the consent of the Lieutenant-General of the realm; and it was notorious that Orleans had no secrets from the Abbé la Riviere. Condé had attached this aspiring ecclesiastic to his interests by ceding to him the nomination to the dignity of Cardinal, which had been granted to the Prince of Conti; and as the Abbé was bound to his master by an oath of secrecy, Condé persuaded Orleans to cancel the obligations in all matters relating to himself. The reassuring reports of his new ally contributed to throw him off his guard, and to make him deaf to the entreaties of his mother, sister, and the keensighted Marsillac, that he would abstain from attending the meetings of the Council of State. But he was leaning on a broken reed; La Riviere was no

longer in a position to do him service. The Regent had revealed to Madame de Chevreuse the particulars of the secret treaty concluded with Condé. The Duchess used the information to detach the affections of Orleans, already somewhat alienated by the Abbé's want of zeal in furthering his attempts on the chastity of one of his wife's Maids of Honour, from the faithless favourite. Left without protection, Gaston yielded to the energetic pressure of his sister-in-law and the cajolery of the Duchess, and gave an unwilling assent to the arrest of his cousins.

It was at length determined in midnight conclave to seize Condé, Conti, and Longueville, at a sitting of the Council of State, specially convened for the consideration of a subject in which they were all interested. On the morning of the appointed day, the project had almost been frustrated by a curious accident. Condé, contrary to his custom, perhaps somewhat uneasy at the rumours which reached him, made an early call at the Palace, and suddenly entered the Cardinal's cabinet, while Lyonne, Under Secretary of State, was making out the order for his arrest. Mazarin, however, received his visitor with an unruffled mien, and having distracted his attention to indifferent subjects until Lyonne had shuffled away the danger-

ous document amongst some other papers, is said to have played off on his unsuspecting victim a practical joke, the sly malice of which was eminently characteristic. When the Prince was about to leave, the Cardinal, suddenly assuming a joyous air, as if he had just recollected something agreeable, mentioned that the police had tracked to an obscure lurking-place a principal agent in the late plot for his assassination. It was expected, Mazarin added, that as this man could make revelations of a character to criminate the Fronde leaders, a rescue would be attempted; it seemed advisable, therefore, that the Prince should sign an order for a body of troops to escort prisoners to the fortress of Vincennes. Condé, burning with still unslaked animosity against De Retz and Beaufort, gave the order with alacrity, and thus became the unconscious instrument of his own captivity.

In the afternoon the three brothers arrived together at the Palais Royal to attend the Council of State, while their mother was closeted with the Regent. These ladies had been for more than twenty years on a footing of intimate affection; and now, alarmed by the suspicions afloat, the old Princess had come to the Palace, expecting that if danger threatened her children, she would read some

indication of it in the demeanour of her old friend. But Anne of Austria, schooled in many trials, was a mistress of dissimulation. She entered with easy familiarity into a confidential conversation with the Princess, dismissing her with an affectionate adieu, only when the time was ripe for an act of vengeance that would crush her and her whole family. Condé had hardly entered the Council Chamber when Guitant, captain of the Regent's Guards, made his appearance. The Prince had a strong regard for the staunch old soldier, and, thinking that he came to solicit some favour, turned towards him with a gracious air; whereupon Guitant whispered the nature of his errand. Condé, amazed and indignant, cried out to his brothers, "We are arrested!" and demanded to see the Regent. But an interview being denied, he submitted with dignity to his fate. Conti wept bitterly, and Longueville's agitation deprived him of speech, and almost of motion. The prisoners were taken by a dark passage to the gardens of the Palace. "This," said Condé, suspiciously, "strongly savours of the States of Blois." "No, monseigneur," replied Guitant; "if that were the case I should not be concerned in it." At a private door, opening from the Gardens into the Rue Richelieu, one of the royal

carriages, surrounded by the escort Condé had ordered out, was in attendance. The faces of some of the soldiers, his old comrades in arms, were familiar to him, and, perhaps, with a view of testing their devotion to their favourite leader, he said, "This, my friends, is not the Battle of Lens." But the soldiers, though expressing in their countenances vivid emotions of grief and sympathy, were obedient to discipline, and the cavalcade started at a rapid pace for Vincennes. On the road the breaking down of the coach in the pitchy darkness of a January evening seemed to afford the prisoners a chance of escape, but it was found impossible to corrupt or elude the stern vigilance of Guitant. During the journey, Condé displayed a calm intrepidity which contrasted strongly with the abject bearing of his companions; and on arriving at Vincennes, finding that, through dread of awakening suspicion, no preparation had been made for his reception, he flung himself on the floor of his chamber and passed twelve hours in unbroken sleep. Conti and Longueville, shivering from fear or fever, watched through the dreary night in profound despair.

In Paris, on the report of their hero's arrest, a body of young noblemen, led by the Duke of Rohan and the Count of Boutteville, assailed the

Convent of Val de Grace in order to obtain possession of Mazarin's nieces, who resided there; and afterwards attempted to raise a popular insurrection by proclaiming that the Duke of Beaufort had been again incarcerated at Vincennes. But the Cardinal had provided for the safety of his young kinswomen by removing them to the Palais Royal; and De Retz promptly allayed the rising tumult in the streets by sending forth Beaufort to parade the town on horseback, decorated with his well-known white plume. When the real facts became known the public anger gave place to exultation. The streets rang with the sounds of rejoicing, and the sky was red with the glare of bonfires, courtier and citizen uniting with emulous enthusiasm to celebrate the downfall of that insolent despotism which had been the object of their common hatred and fear. Orleans, on recovering from the agony of terror into which the fierce determination with which the Regent wrung from him a scared consent to Condé's imprisonment, had thrown him, and being apprised of her success, whistled carelessly, and said, "The Regent has made a good haul of the net—she has captured a fox, a monkey, and a lion."

## CHAPTER II.

THE bold and skilful stroke of the Government, in arresting Condé and his brothers, exposed it to two formidable dangers—a hostile decree of the Parliament of Paris in vindication of the violated Declaration of October, and an armed revolt of the numerous and powerful adherents of the imprisoned Princes throughout the provinces. From the former peril it was saved by its alliance with the Coadjutor. The partizans of the Court and of the Fronde cordially uniting their forces, the High Court sanctioned, by an immense majority, the illegal proceeding of the Regent as an exceptional act, imperatively demanded by the public welfare. Almost alone, the First President Molé, whose clear, firm mind, unshaken by gusts of passions and unwarped by the sophistries of statecraft, remained ever true to the principles of justice, stood forth as the champion of the con-

stitution, of which he was the principal author. But his voice was drowned in the tumult of popular delirium, and he was only able to offer by his sad and stern aspect, among the joyous crowds that thronged the Palais Royal, a mute protest against the abuse of the royal prerogative. It is in France especially that the French proverb is true, "Nothing succeeds like success."

The Government was not equally fortunate in its attempts to avert a civil war, by seizing the persons of Condé's leading adherents then assembled in Paris. A feeling of shame, mingled perhaps with contempt, restrained the Regent and her minister from dealing harshly with the two Princesses of Condé, the Dowager, Anne of Austria's old and tried friend, the younger, niece of Mazarin's great benefactor. The sorrowing ladies were allowed to retire with the little Duke of Enghien to Chantilly. But every precaution which policy and vengeance suggested was used to insure the capture of Madame de Longueville and the military chiefs. All of them, however, having timely intimation of their danger, contrived to elude pursuit. Bouillon and his brother Turenne, disguising themselves as boatmen, escaped down the Seine in the darkness of the night. The Duke repaired to his estates in Auvergne. Turenne took

refuge in Condé's frontier town of Stenay, where he raised the standard of revolt in the name of the imprisoned Princes. The Count of Boutteville, a young cadet of the House of Montmorenci, deformed in person and of depraved life, but already exhibiting promise of the military genius which long afterwards made all Europe ring with the renown of the Marshal Duke of Luxembourg, fled to Burgundy, and called that province to arms. The Regent was particularly eager to secure the person of Madame de Longueville, whose insolent rivalry during the siege of Paris, and the subsequent dictatorship of Condé, had provoked her deepest resentment. Upon the arrest of her husband and her brothers, the Duchess received a message commanding her instant attendance at the Palais Royal. She feigned compliance, and with the assistance of her friend, the Princess Palatine, found a temporary retreat at a mean house in the suburbs. In the night the Prince of Marsillac carried her off into Normandy, of which province Longueville was governor. But Condé's imprisonment was a blow so sudden and unexpected, that it left his party completely paralyzed; and before the scattered leaders had time to organize their forces, or frame any connected scheme of resistance, the rapid and vigorous

measures of the Government completed their discomfiture.

The periods of internal convulsion which chequer the progress of even the most prosperous nations, resemble those bleak and dismal wastes that occasionally sadden the traveller's eye amidst a rich expanse of blooming landscapes. History reads us no more emphatic lesson, than that stable institutions are absolutely essential to the well-being of a State. It repeats in every age its mournful warning, that anarchy is a scourge armed with every variety of evil, moral, intellectual and physical; destroying the legitimate supremacy of religion and of reason; enthroning the basest passions on the eternal seat of justice; rending the most sacred and tender bonds of social life; extinguishing letters, arts, and sciences in blood and tears; sowing the dragon's teeth of human misery, wherever its reign extends. But in the compulsory union, yet ceaseless conflict, of antagonistic elements, which is the universal law of life, in the mysterious and often apparent, inconsistent chain of cause and effect, in which human events are linked, evil is ever the companion and the occasion of good. When the fountains of the great deep of human intelligence, long sealed in restless slumber, are

breaking up, and society is riven by the throes of some momentous revolution, from the strife of warring forces is born genius, whose high mission is to construct and to redeem; to mould the chaos into new forms of social life; to educe from disorder new systems of polity. Even when anarchy is merely a war of selfish instincts, the seething up through the shattered crust of society of the corruption that ferments at its heart, it has always features that reclaim it from utter hideousness. In the life of a polished and well-ordered community, evil and good are rarely brought into strong contrast. Under its placid surface heroic virtue, as well as colossal vice, lies hidden and unsuspected. But the troubles that stimulate into portentous activity the basest passions of human nature, also afford an incitement and a field to its noblest qualities. Herbs of healing power flourish by the deadliest plants. Sweet flowers bloom, and living rills gush forth in the most savage desert. And from amidst the crimes and miseries of mankind spring up great deeds and immortal virtues, to shed light and beauty and consolation; divine seeds that blossom into golden harvests long after the memory of the desolate seed time has passed away. Thus the spirit of chivalry, the glory of mediæval Europe, and the soul of

Christian heroism, which flung such a pure and softening radiance over the grim terrors of feudal barbarism, still survives, to inform, however imperfectly, the gross materialism of modern civilization.

This tendency of calamitous times, to develop latent strength and goodness of character, finds its most striking manifestations in the finer nature of woman. Every country has furnished examples of women, often of fragile frame and shrinking delicacy, cradled in the lap of refined luxury, so that even the breezes of summer seemed to visit their cheeks too roughly, who kindled by the fire and endued with the sublime power of some lofty purpose, have displayed a patient courage, a fertility of resource, even a capacity of physical endurance that shame the strength and intellect of man; who have lived and died marvels and mysteries to his grosser sympathies. The annals of no other land are so rich in records of feminine worth, so illumined by the splendour of feminine achievements as those of France. And even the sordid passions and ignoble contentions of the Fronde produced heroines whose exploits lend to that barren struggle an enduring interest.

The escape of Condé's leading adherents from Paris only stimulated the Regent to more vigorous

efforts to crush the scattered forces of insurrection before they gathered to a head. Troops were instantly despatched to reduce the provinces of which the imprisoned princes had been governors. The towns of Champagne and Burgundy opened their gates without resistance to the Duke of Vendôme, now High Admiral of France and Governor of Burgundy, and propped in his new fortunes by the betrothal of his son, Mercœur, to Olympia Mancini. Only the fortress of Bellegarde, into which the Count of Boutteville had thrown himself with a body of gentlemen, defied the royal arms in the eastern part of the kingdom. The province of Berri accepted its new governor, the Count of St. Aignan, with equal facility, the cause of Condé being upheld there only in the almost impregnable castle of Montrond.

In the meantime, Anne of Austria, with all the energy which offended authority and personal resentment could call forth in an imperious nature, had pursued Madame de Longueville into Normandy. Rendered insensible to fatigue or privation by the ardour of her feelings, she passed almost the whole of each day on horseback. Mazarin and the Court, unable to keep pace with her movements, followed more leisurely in the rear. Rouen and other important towns surren-

dered to her first summons, and Madame de Longueville, hunted from place to place, sought shelter at Havre from the Duchess of Richelieu. But this artful lady, in whom gratitude was evidently a lively expectation of future benefits, seizing the opportunity of purchasing by her present services the recognition of her marriage by the Regent, repulsed her unfortunate friend from the gates, and even made a merit of allowing her to continue her flight. Marsillac had departed some time before to raise his vassals in Poitou, and the forlorn fugitive threw herself into the crag-built castle of Dieppe. This last refuge also failed her. On the approach of the royal forces, the Governor declared his inability to hold out the place, and the citizens of Dieppe were deaf to her eloquent appeals to them to arm in its defence. It was a dark and tempestuous night, wild even beyond the terrible experience of that iron-bound coast. The storm howled dismally around the mist-clad turrets of the castle, and the sea, rolling in mountainous billows, broke in thunder at its base. One of two courses was open to the Duchess; either to brave the fury of the elements, or to throw herself on the mercy of the Regent. She did not for a moment hesitate in her choice. Having first made a general confession to a priest,

she left the castle by a private outlet, and proceeded on foot along the coast, accompanied by a few attendants, to a small port about two leagues distant, where a foreign vessel, in which she had secured a passage, lay at anchor. The little party toiled along their broken way, through the pitchy darkness which clothed in deeper horror the terrors that encompassed them. They were beaten by the fierce tempest and by the drifting spray, and were guided only by the hoarse roar of the raging surf, and the forked lightnings which, flashing through the gloom, lit up into fitful splendour the wild sublimity of the scene. On reaching the harbour they found two small boats, which had been hired to take them to the ship. But even the hardiest sailors of the coast, daunted by the perilous aspect of the sea, refused to venture out. The entreaties of the Duchess and the promise of a large reward at length prevailed. One of the crew carried her in his arms through the surf, and placed her in a boat. But she was almost instantly dashed from it by the rush of waters, and it was at the imminent risk of their own lives that the gentlemen of her suite, plunging into the foam, rescued her, when half-drowned, from the breakers. On recovering consciousness she was eager to renew the attempt, but all her

eloquence and liberality failed to induce the seamen to consent. The following day she concealed herself, and in the night, the wind having lulled, was just putting off from the shore, when one of her friends galloped up with information that the captain of the vessel, in which she was about to embark, had taken an enormous bribe from Cardinal Mazarin to deliver her up. After this narrow escape, she wandered along the sea shore for fifteen days, disguised in male attire and beset by dangers and privations. She succeeded at last in obtaining a passage under a feigned name, which belied her sex, from Havre to Holland in an English ship. From Holland she proceeded to Stenay, where there is reason to fear she soon forgot her vows of penitence in the society of Viscount Turenne.

Turenne has been pronounced by the highest judges one of the most consummate masters of the art of war that any age or country has produced. His qualifications for command were in a manner hereditary. His maternal uncle, Prince Maurice of Nassau, had been endowed by nature with military genius still more splendid than his own; his father had been one of the most distinguished captains of Henry IV. The interest of his powerful family opened to him, at an

unusually early age, opportunities of displaying the talents which rendered him illustrious. Whether from deficiency of knowledge or of enterprise, the greatness of the difficulties, or the blind caprice of fortune, his first campaigns were rarely successful. At the battle of Mariendal he suffered the greatest disgrace that can befall a general, in allowing his army to be surprised, and almost annihilated by Count Mercy and John of Werth. But subsequent study and experience so developed and matured his extraordinary natural ability, as to advance him in the judgment of Napoleon to the very foremost place among modern strategists. It was peculiar to him of famous commanders, that years lent fire to his temperament while perfecting his skill. As he grew older he grew more enterprising, and his latest operations were at once the most faultless and the most brilliant. His was not the genius of Condé, which at its very first dawning burst forth into dazzling effulgence. Its rising was obscured by shadows, but as it slowly climbed its starry pathway the mantling vapours were dissipated by its expanding radiance, leaving it to set in the fulness of glory. Condé's genius, fervid and daring, flashed out with the light of inspiration in the tumult of battle, confounding and destroying

his foes by some prodigy of tactics at the very moment when their triumph seemed assured. The genius of Turenne displayed its patient energy and its unbounded resources to most advantage amidst the discouragement and the disorganization of defeat. A single victory which, indeed, rather deserves the name of a conquest, placed the young hero of Rocroi upon the pinnacle of fame. His great rival reached the same proud eminence by a slow and toilsome, but not less certain progress. Turenne was of middle stature, powerfully and rather clumsily built, and adorned with few of the graces of a Court. His features, strongly marked, even to harshness, wore a habitual expression of melancholy, which his thick and contracted eye-brows almost deepened into gloom. His ordinary demeanour betrayed a want of ease and self-confidence, which appeared to indicate irresolution of character. But though modest almost to a fault, and constitutionally cautious, no man in trying emergencies arrived more rapidly at a decision, or adhered to it more tenaciously. He was cheerful, gentle, sincere; simple in his tastes, generous and hospitable; a warm friend and a placable enemy. His capacity for government, although less exercised, was not inferior to his capacity for war. He had been

brought up in the Huguenot faith, to which his family had given some of its bravest champions. During the earlier part of his career, whilst a member of the brilliant but profligate military party, of which Condé was the hero and chief, he did not entirely escape the taint of fashionable vices. In later life, religion reckoned him amongst her most fervent votaries, Catholicity amongst her most illustrious converts. In truth, he became one of the choicest specimens of a great and good man, of genius purified and exalted by virtue.

The beautiful and ambitious Duchess of Bouillon had been prevented from being the companion of her husband's flight by an advanced state of pregnancy. The Regent harshly ordered her to be arrested on the day, and almost at the hour when she was confined in child-birth. The only solace vouchsafed to her, in the languor of illness and the solitude of a rigorous constraint, was an occasional visit from a daughter who had been separated from her, a child about nine years old. One evening, as the little girl was leaving her mother's chamber, a sentinel preceding her with a torch to light the way through the dim ante-rooms, the Duchess crouching down followed close behind, and contrived to secrete herself in a cellar. From this dismal asylum she was dragged

through an air-hole by her maids. Her friends, without losing a moment, provided her with the means of escape from Paris; and she was on the point of setting out for Auvergne, when word was brought to her that her daughter had been stricken with the small-pox. No personal consideration could sever the tender mother from the couch of her suffering child. The agents of Government, with the keen instincts of their calling, found the Duchess watching by her daughter's pillow, and flung her into the Bastille.

But the highest example of feminine worth was afforded by the young Princess of Condé, who, called forth by the misfortunes of her husband from comparative obscurity and contempt to play a great part on the political stage, became, through native force and beauty of her character, the wonder and the admiration of the age. Her life, since her inauspicious nuptials, had been passed in meek endurance of unprovoked wrongs. After Richelieu's death, Condé's aversion to the child who had been forced upon him as a bride, countenanced by the open disdain of his proud family, manifested itself in studied neglect. For the contemptuous dislike of her husband, which neither her love, her gentle virtues, nor her patient submission had power to soften, and the

indignities heaped upon her by his haughty kindred, the young Princess found but a poor recompense in the dreary isolation of a barren greatness, shorn of honour and uncheered by sympathy. But hers was one of those noble natures which great trials, instead of crushing, strengthen and purify. At a time when the manners of the majority of her sex in Paris might be truly described as chartered libertinism, and notwithstanding conjugal wrongs sufficient to irritate the most forbearing of women, her character was unsullied by the faintest breath of slander. Indeed, her chastity was the theme of general and, most frequently, derisive comment. But even the few who appreciated the modest virtues that bloomed on the monotonous surface of her joyless life, never suspected the deep rich mine that lay concealed beneath, waiting for the rude hand of calamity to lay bare its treasures.

Around the Princesses at Chantilly there assembled a little court of noble ladies, the most distinguished of whom was Angelique de Montmorenci, the beautiful Duchess of Chatillon. Some years before, Condé, then at the zenith of his fame, had loved Angelique passionately. The young Duke of Chatillon, who, inflamed with as deep and a more legitimate affection, was a suitor

for her hand, viewed with alarm the advances of such a formidable competitor. He knew but of one way to disarm the rivalry that menaced his happiness, which was to reveal his own attachment in confidence to the Prince. Condé, with a generosity rare at that profligate period, sacrificed his passion to friendship. He not only discontinued his attentions, but he aided his rival to carry off the prize, and afterwards reconciled the lady's family, who were his own maternal relatives, to the marriage. After Chatillon's death, at the battle of Charenton, Condé renewed his suit with the Duchess. It was coldly received. But when reverses had darkened the proud fortunes of the hero, when the eagle was caged in the donjon of Vincennes, Angelique, touched with pity, devoted herself to solace his mother's grief and to promote his liberation.

The party at Chantilly was soon joined by the able and faithful Lenet. Communications were then opened with the partizans of the Princes throughout the country, and with independent members of the Parliament of Paris who resented the infraction of the Declaration of October as a fatal blow to public liberty. Anne of Austria had hastened from Normandy, with her son and Cardinal Mazarin, to press the siege of Bellegarde,

where the Count of Boutteville made a stout defence. The restoration of the Marquis of Chateaufort to his old place of Keeper of the Seals, the grant of the reversion of the post of High Admiral to the Duke of Beaufort, and the flatteries and promises lavished on the Coadjutor, secured for the present the allegiance of the Fronde and the tranquillity of Paris. But the absence of the Regent and her Minister from the centre of Government, allowed opportunities of political intrigue, which the indefatigable Lenet strove to turn to account. The young Princess at first had little weight in the councils at Chantilly. She was regarded as an intruder into the family of Bourbon, as a feeble girl without capacity or high instincts to qualify her for the direction of State affairs. Lenet was the first to discern glimmerings of a lofty spirit and superior talents through the veil of her timid reserve. His schemes were paralyzed by the irresolution and avarice of the Dowager Princess, whose courage was broken, and whose natural failings were morbidly developed by age and misfortune. Foreseeing that Claire, especially if accompanied by her son, would play a much more important part in a civil war, he constantly lent her encouragement and support.

Plotting, however, was not the sole occupation of the fair conspirators at Chantilly. Golden threads of pleasure were interwoven in the sombre tissue of intrigue. The Chateau, crowning scenery of bewitching beauty, surrounded by gardens laid out with exquisite taste, and graced by the presence of young and lovely women, became the secret resort of gallant gentlemen from all parts of the kingdom. The Dowager Princess, with the majestic remains of that peerless beauty which had so nearly set all Europe in a flame, still preserved undiminished a sparkling wit, and the charm of conversational powers not less remarkable than her beauty. Many an amusing anecdote of her royal lover, relieving gloomier recollections of the terrible Richelieu, was now drunk in from her lips by a brilliant circle of delighted listeners. In the fervid heat of noon, ladies and cavaliers dispersed themselves through the delicious shades of embowering foliage, weaving the bright fancies of youth and passion, as they lounged in luxurious indolence in perfumed arbours, which the faint breath of orange trees, and the cool murmurs of gleaming fountains made paradises for a Sybarite. At eventide, when a gentle breeze awaking fanned the earth with its fragrant wings, they strolled in laughing groups by the borders of the lake. The

vivid flash of wit, the genial play of humour, the gorgeous dreams of fancy, the light jest, the stinging epigram, the soft magic of love, eloquent in bright smiles and chivalrous homage, threw a sunshine over the cares of faction, and lent a deeper spell to that enchanting landscape, which spread away, radiant and ever various, beneath the stately promenades of Chantilly.

This chequered life of conspiracy and pleasure was brought somewhat abruptly to a close. Secret reports from Paris informed the Regent, then at Dijon, that Chantilly had become a focus of rebellion. She despatched a gentleman of the King's household, named De Vouldy, to arrest the Princesses, and to escort the younger to Chateauroux, a stern and isolated old castle, belonging to Condé, in Berri. The sudden occupation of the neighbouring villages by detachments of the royal troops gave the fair offenders at Chantilly warning of their danger, and, with the assistance of Lenet, they concerted an ingenious plan of operations to defeat the intentions of the Regent.

The Dowager Princess, feigning severe illness, retired to her bed. Claire, who, when the alarm was given, was confined to her's by fever, arose, and concealed herself with the little Duke of Enghien. Her place was taken by Miss Gerbier,

a young English lady of her household, whose resemblance to her mistress was sufficient to deceive a not very intrusive observer, in the gloom of a sick chamber. A gardener's son was dressed to represent the Duke of Enghien. De Vouldy, on producing the Regent's warrant, was introduced with the most anxious precautions into the bed-chambers of the Princesses, and so well did the pretended invalids perform their parts that he was thoroughly deceived. He naturally shrank from unnecessary harshness towards prisoners whose rank, sex, and condition of health, claimed respectful forbearance. Contenting himself with making arrangements to visit them in person at short intervals, he left them in comparative freedom. Towards midnight, Claire, accompanied by her son, disguised as a girl, and by a few ladies, stole from the chateau. At the outskirts of the forest the party found a capacious coach and six, of sober colour, which had been stationed there to receive them by the care of Lenet. They entered at once, and set off for the Castle of Montrond, travelling as the family of Madame de Tourville, the Princess's first Lady of Honour. Their safety was watched over by a mounted escort of gentlemen, who, in order to avoid observation, travelled in pairs, each detach-

ment stopping at a different inn, and suppressing all recognition of the others. On reaching Paris a change of horses was obtained from the Hotel de Condé, and the fugitives continued their journey southwards, halting only at the houses of assured friends, when rest and food were absolutely necessary. They crossed the Loire at a ferry opposite the chateau of the Duke of Sully, grandson of the great minister, who had passed more than forty years in this retreat, having survived Cardinal Richelieu. As Claire waited on the bank for the coach to be ferried over, sitting, in order to disarm suspicion, on Lenet's knee, she was recognised by a servant from the chateau. The Duke courteously offered her hospitality and succour, but dreading the risk of delay, she pressed forward, and, after an exhausting journey of three days and nights, reached Montrond in safety.

The Castle of Montrond crowned the summit of a precipitous cliff which arose in the angle formed by the junction of the rivers Cher and Marmaude. Towering high from the centre of an extensive plain, it commanded the little town of St. Amand, which lay nestling at its feet, and one of the most beautiful and fruitful regions of France. Nature and art had combined to render

the place almost impregnable. Three sides of the cliff, furrowed by chasms, were washed by a deep and rapid current. The fourth side was girdled by three lines of strong fortifications, the outermost of which could only be approached by a single narrow pathway hewn in the rock. An abundant spring of pure water gushed forth on the summit, fertilizing a considerable extent of pasturage. It was a stronghold in which a small garrison, well supplied with ammunition and provisions, might have defied with impunity a powerful army. But the Princess found it on her arrival so destitute of defenders and of the means of defence, that, notwithstanding its strength, it afforded but an insecure refuge from the anger of the Regent.

Meanwhile the comedy of Chantilly was successfully played out. Every day De Vouldy visited his prisoners, politely assured himself of their safety, and awaited their convalescence in complete security. Rumours of the flight of the younger Princess having reached Mazarin, a second messenger was despatched to Chantilly from the Court. But De Vouldy laughed to scorn the uneasiness of the Government. The young lady, he averred, was never longer than a few hours out of his sight. His eyes were only

opened to the deception that had been practised on him, when the Dowager Princess, having allowed sufficient time to elapse for her daughter-in-law's journey, escaped by night to Paris, attended by Madame de Chatillon.

The Chambers having adjourned for vacation, the old Princess concealed herself for ten days in the house of a friendly Councillor of Requests. On the morning of the re-assembling of the Parliament she went with Madame de Chatillon to the Palace of Justice, holding in her hand a petition to the High Court that the article against arbitrary arrests in the Declaration of October, 1648, might be enforced. Standing at the outer door, for a long time she vainly solicited each member as he came in to advocate her cause. At length a patriotic magistrate, named Deslande Payen, said he should not be prevented by fear from doing his duty, and took charge of the petition. At the instance of the First President Molé, a day was appointed for its consideration, and Madame de Condé was assigned a temporary residence under the protection of the Court.

The Palais Royal and the Fronde were still in the first transports of their strange alliance, and the coalition employed every art and strained every effort to defeat the motion. The Duke of Orleans,

who represented the Crown, during the Regent's absence in Burgundy, went to the Palace of Justice, accompanied by De Retz and Beaufort, to cast the weight of his personal influence into the scale of authority. They found the old Princess awaiting their arrival in the entrance hall. Throwing herself at their feet, with tearful supplications, she implored their compassion. Orleans escaped from her in haste, muttering some incoherent excuses; Beaufort could not utter a word; "and as for me," says De Retz, "I almost died of shame." Deslande Payen supported the prayer of his client with ability and courage. The magistrates found themselves in a position of peculiar embarrassment. They had gone to all lengths, even so far as to plunge the kingdom into civil war, in defence of the principle of the liberty of the subject invoked by their suppliant. To suffer this principle, when the ink of the treaty solemnly affirming it was scarcely dry, to be openly violated without even a protest, was to pass the most severe condemnation on themselves. They must stand convicted before all France either of unjustifiable rebellion or of a servile betrayal of the national interests. But the odious despotism of Condé was still fresh in every memory—still filled every heart with hatred and

with fear. And strong personal and party animosities overbore, in the minds of the majority, higher considerations of patriotism and justice. De Retz and his satellites inveighed against the insolent tyranny of the great enemy of popular rights. The Duke of Orleans, in an artful speech of affected moderation, deplored the necessities of the time which compelled him to oppose the immediate liberation of his cousins, as being fraught with danger to the State. To clinch his arguments, he produced an intercepted copy of a treaty, which Madame de Longueville and Turenne had concluded with the Spaniards. The sight of this treasonable document quieted the conscience of the Assembly, by seeming to afford the justification which it felt that the course it was resolved to follow needed. The petition was rejected by a large majority. The old Princess, however, chiefly through the interposition of Molé, was permitted by the Regent to retire to the country seat of the Duchess of Chatillon. The proud spirit that had borne her up amidst the misfortunes of her married life, amidst the ruin of her illustrious house, when her husband seemed hopelessly estranged from her, when her gallant and accomplished brother, the last Duke of Montmorenci, perished on the scaffold, sank under the calamities that

overwhelmed her children. Crushed by a weight of grief and despair, which all the tender solicitude of Madame de Chatillon was unable to lighten, she soon found refuge from her sufferings in the grave.

While these events were passing in Paris, the younger Princess, assisted by the able and energetic Lenet, was striving against almost insuperable difficulties to put Montrond in a state of defence. The Castle was destitute of resources of every kind, and Claire soon learned that misfortune has a gorgon aspect which turns the hearts of friends into stone. Her father, the old Marshal Brezé, famous throughout the kingdom for his eccentric and somewhat cynical habits, had died in the early part of the year. On his death-bed he exacted an oath from his principal officer, Dumont by name, to hold the strong town of Saumur, of which he had long been Governor, in the interest of his daughter. Claire's first step on reaching Montrond was to communicate with Dumont and with the Prince of Marsillac, who had just succeeded to his patrimonial title of Duke of la Rochefoucault. The Duke assembled all his retainers, upon the pretext of celebrating his father's obsequies, and marched towards Saumur. But news meeting him on the way that Dumont,

seduced by Mazarin's bribes, had betrayed his trust, he was obliged to disband his forces, and retire to the Chateau of Verteuil. The old Princess of Condé, whose many admirable qualities were sullied by the vice of avarice, distracted by anguish and terror, refused to unlock her hoards. The powerful connexions of Condé and Brezé, believing the cause of the imprisoned Princes hopeless, hastened to make their peace with the Regent, and in reply to their young kinswoman's solicitations for succour, counselled submission. She could see from the battlements, the new Governor of Berri, the Count of St. Aignan, a creature of Mazarin, prowling around the Castle with a strong body of horsemen, as if meditating hostilities. After a while, intelligence arrived of the surrender of Bellegarde, the last remaining possession of her husband in Burgundy. The condition of her affairs seemed utterly desperate even to her staunchest supporters. But she bore bravely up against disaster and defection. "Her trust," she said, "was in God, the protector of innocence."

Brightening prospects gradually justified the young Princess's confidence. Sums of money, raised by the sale or on the security of her father's effects, were secretly expended in

procuring munitions of war. Many of the late defenders of Bellegarde stole across the country, and threw themselves into Montrond. The neighbouring gentry sent in supplies of provisions under cover of the night. And what was of the greatest moment, the Regent and Mazarin, having their hands full in other quarters, and despising her as an adversary, allowed themselves to listen to her excuses, conveyed in a letter full of pathos and submission, which deprecated Anne of Austria's anger, and the hostile proceedings of St. Aignan. Accepting her plea that she had substantially obeyed the royal mandate in retiring to Berri, the Government imprudently instructed St. Aignan to suffer her to remain unmolested during her good behaviour. It soon had reason bitterly to repent its error. The gentry of Berri, who now flocked openly to pay her their respects, captivated by the natural charm of her manners and conversation, became enthusiastic in her cause. Every day noble volunteers arrived from all parts of France to swell the garrison of Montrond. In order not to arouse suspicion, most of these were quietly quartered in the village of St. Amand, or distributed through the neighbouring chateaux. Finally the Dukes of Bouillon and La Rochefoucault sent her word that they had concerted a

plan of operations, and were ready to take the field at the head of their vassals, if she would join them with her son.

It was resolved in the Princess's Council, of which the leading members were Lenet and Count Coligni, that she should embrace without delay the proposal of the Dukes. A great hunting party was proclaimed, and upon the pretext of sport, the partizans of Condé, in Berri, were summoned to meet at Montrond. When the guests had all assembled in the great hall of the castle, the gates were locked, and Claire entered the apartment, leading the little Duke of Enghien by the hand. Nature had endowed her with few of the external attributes with which fancy loves to adorn a heroine. Her figure, though graceful and well-proportioned, was diminutive; her features, pleasing and intelligent rather than striking, notwithstanding the soft fire of her eyes, were deficient in regularity; her manners on ordinary occasions were remarkably gentle and unobtrusive. But her insignificant frame was informed by a noble spirit which, when stirred by deep emotion, lit up her countenance into singular beauty, and touched her tongue with irresistible eloquence. And now when, pale and weeping, but with the light of heroic courage flashing through her

tears, she recounted in pathetic language the woes and wrongs of her husband and her son, and told her moved listeners that she was about to confide to the keeping of their honour the Castle of Montrond, the wreck of the fortunes of a Prince, but yesterday the strength and glory of France, to-day the impotent victim of a perfidious foreigner, the assembled warriors, electrified by her words, sprang to their feet as one man, and swore to die in its defence.

Tearing herself away with difficulty from a scene of frantic enthusiasm, Claire, attended by Lenet, Coligni, and a small train, left Montrond on the night of the 8th of May, and started upon her journey. She rode on a pillion behind Coligni, who, to disarm suspicion, gave out at each halting-place on the route that she was a rich heiress whom he was carrying off into the wilds of Auvergne. This pretext sufficed in that adventurous age to obtain for him general sympathy and assistance. They crossed the Cher and afterwards the Allier, eluding the rapid pursuit of St. Aignan, climbed by rocky paths the steep mountains of Chantal, and on the 14th of May reached the camp which the Dukes had pitched near the village of Anglar. As the Princess rode along the lines of burnished steel and tossing plumes, drawn up to

receive her, there arose in a mighty shout, a war-cry which shortly afterwards re-echoed throughout France, "Long live the Princes and down with Mazarin." She was conducted in a species of triumphal procession to Bouillon's ancestral seat, the Chateau of Turenne.

The Duke entertained his fair guest with princely hospitality. He accorded her sovereign honours. Fêtes, balls, masquerades, crowned the day with pleasure and dethroned the night. But, with the chief personages, revelry was but the mask of political intrigue, furnishing occasions for drawing together the neighbouring gentry. Whilst apparently engrossed by festivity the Princess and the Dukes laboured incessantly in secret council to organize a formidable revolt. They sought to enlist the support of the great Huguenot connexion of the south-west, which, until shattered by the blows of Richelieu, had often successfully defied the whole power of the Crown. But their most anxious care was to induce the Parliament and citizens of Bordeaux actively to espouse the cause of the Princes. In order to understand this solicitude, it is only necessary to keep in view the political condition of the state. At that period of selfish turbulence, the countenance of one of the High Courts of

Justice was essential to the success of an insurrection. These great magisterial bodies were the sole barriers that protected the mass of the population from the despotism of the Crown, and in their public conduct might be recognised something of the spirit and dignity of the laws of which they were interpreters and guardians. Unlike the factious nobles who took advantage of the disorders of the kingdom to eke out their slender revenues by rapine, who obeyed only the ever varying impulses of individual cupidity or caprice, the Parliaments were ever consistently united in the defence of their common privileges, and frequently joined in vindicating public liberty and national interests. The honourable contrast which their fidelity to their order and their patriotism afforded to the political profligacy of the nobility, and their origin among the great unprivileged class, secured to them the attachment and veneration of the people. Wealthy burghers, who paid but a grumbling obedience to a Royal Edict, donned helmet and loosed purse-string with alacrity at the appeal of a Parliament. An insurrection inaugurated with such auspices lost in the popular eye the darker hues of rebellion, and was, in a manner, hallowed by the sanction of public justice.

The house of Condé and the city of Bordeaux were bound together by hereditary ties of protection and gratitude. The captive Prince himself had laid the citizens under obligations. They viewed his downfall with regret, and were moved by a generous compassion for his wife and son. Domestic grievances of their own strengthened this feeling of sympathy. They groaned under the insolent exactions of the Duke of Epernon, a rapacious and profligate nobleman, whom, in opposition to their repeated remonstrances, Mazarin upheld in his mis-government of Aquitaine on account of the suit of his son, the Duke of Candale, for the Countess of Martinozzi, the Cardinal's beautiful niece. Thus, at this critical juncture, the second city of the kingdom, already biassed in her favour by ancient associations and personal attachment, was goaded by oppression to take up arms in the Princess's cause.

Claire and her council, on receiving certain intelligence of the favourable sentiments of the citizens of Bordeaux, determined to assemble all their forces without delay and march upon the city. This resolution was executed with celerity and vigour. Messages flew through the adjacent provinces summoning the partizans of the im-

prisoned Princes to assemble in arms, and the call was promptly obeyed. From the rugged mountains of Auvergne; from the golden plains of Languedoc, consecrated to poetry and love; from the vine-clad slopes of Gascony, gallant nobles poured to the common rendezvous, girt with numerous and warlike vassals, all wearing over their armour scarves of "Isabelle." This badge of the insurgents derived its origin and its name from an incident sufficiently ludicrous in itself, and curious, as being perhaps the last historical illustration of one of the customs of more pious times. In the year 1601, the Archduchess Isabella, Sovereign of the Netherlands, besieged Ostend, which had revolted from the Spanish rule, with a powerful army. The cannon of the Spaniards soon battered down the defences of the town; yawning breaches invited an assault; and the Archduchess, in the fervour of her enthusiasm and to stimulate her troops, rashly vowed that she would not change her linen till the place had fallen. She found to her misfortune that she had sadly under-rated the stubborn valour of the Flemings. The garrison, with deplorable want of consideration, made a most obstinate resistance. Successive storming parties were repulsed with prodigious slaughter.

The shattered ramparts, manned by determined patriotism, were proof against all the resources of military science and skill, exhausted by the compassionate gallantry of the most chivalrous and veteran army of Europe. The siege was turned into a blockade, and three long years had passed away before the patient vigilance of the besiegers famished the citizens into submission. Isabella, being a devout Catholic, kept her vow, at a sad sacrifice of personal comfort, and of the lustre of her linen. As may be imagined, her ladies were plunged into profound despair. They anxiously sought the most appropriate means of testifying their sympathy. Even courtly flattery, even Spanish loyalty shrank from the inconveniences of a strict imitation. But they suggested an expedient which afforded at once a touching and an unobjectionable expression of grief, which invested the fair mourners with all the interest, without involving any of the misery of martyrdom. All the ladies of the Flemish Court had their linen dyed a pale yellow. This jaundiced tint became the rage, the magic of fashion gave it beauty, its origin gave it a name, and Condé raised it to political significance, by adopting it as his particular colour.

At the head of a small but well-appointed army

the Princess rapidly descended the Dordogne. The Duke of Epernon sent his brother, the Chevalier de la Valette, with a strong force to oppose her, and a battle was fought near the village of Montclar. The Royalists were routed and driven from the field, leaving their standards, baggage, and military chest in the hands of the insurgents. The victorious troops continued their march to the famous chateau of Courtras, which had been inherited by the Princess on the death of her brother, the Duke of Brezé. Here it was determined to await fresh advices from Bordeaux. Summer now rejoiced in the exquisite freshness of its early bloom. The country around the chateau, the scene of the defeat of the Duke of Joyeuse by Henry of Navarre, was crowned with majestic woods, which opened in long shadowy vistas upon an enchanting variety of landscapes, resplendent with the glowing hues of the South. Mountains now stern and bare, now waving with verdure; gently swelling slopes clothed with vineyards and olive-groves; golden valleys through which the tributaries of the Dordogne wandered like veins of silver, grouped in ever-changing forms of beauty, charmed the eye. In this region of delight war smoothed his rugged front, and laid aside all his ferocity. The Duke of Bouil-

lon, violently smitten by the attractions of Miss Gerbier, who had contrived to rejoin her mistress, set an example of gallantry which gave a tone to the whole army. The sweet forest glades, upon whose flower-enamelled sward Titania might have loved to gambol with her fairy court, resounded with the mirth of less ethereal revellers ; and occasionally some Orlando might be seen carving the memorials of his passion on the venerable trees, the mangled witnesses of his raptures or despair.

Tidings of an unfavourable character quickly terminated this brief season of dalliance. The Parliament of Paris, on receiving intelligence of the outbreak of civil war, had proclaimed Bouillon and La Rochefoucault public enemies. The Dukes of la Force, St. Simon, Tremouille, and other influential Huguenots, upon whose co-operation the insurgents had counted, refused to move, or declared for the Government. Lavie, Advocate-General of the Parliament of Bordeaux, had been sent down from the Court to keep the city to its allegiance, and was vigorously supported by the municipal authorities. An adverse reaction swayed the Parliament. This body had been willing to harbour and defend persecuted fugitives, the wife and son of their benefactor. But it hesitated to incur the manifold perils which it

foresaw must result from admitting into the city a victorious Princess, surrounded by a devoted army, commanded by turbulent and unscrupulous noblemen who had been declared traitors by the highest judicial authority of the kingdom. The mass of the citizens, however, filled with unreasoning hatred of Epemon and Mazarin, did not share the wise apprehensions of the magistrates. But their leaders found it necessary to temporise. Messages from her principal adherents urged the Princess to enter Bordeaux without delay, unattended by the Dukes or by any armed escort. Responding to these invitations, she crossed the Garonne in an open boat, accompanied only by her son and her ladies. When she reached the port the guns of several hundred vessels thundered forth their welcome. The whole population of the city poured forth to receive her, and bore her in triumph along streets spanned by festive arches, gay with the streaming banners of many nations, and strewn with flowers, to a palace which had been prepared for her residence.

Early on the following morning, Claire, attended by a vast crowd, went to the House of Parliament and petitioned the assembled magistrates to espouse her cause. The debate on her petition was stormy and protracted. But the tide of opinion

was flowing strongly in favour of a neutral policy, when the Princess rushed into the Chamber, leading her little son by the hand, and beautiful in the sublime agony of maternal woe. She was received with deep respect, and at once accorded a hearing. The grief and love of a mother inspired her language. She said she had brought her son to the Parliament of Bordeaux a suppliant for justice and for protection against Mazarin. He alone of his house was at liberty; he was only seven years of age; his illustrious father was in irons; his ancestors had been their protectors; would they not have compassion on his tender innocence which represented so much glory and so many misfortunes! Here emotion choked her voice, and the little Prince, casting himself upon his knee, exclaimed, "Be a father to me, gentlemen, for Cardinal Mazarin has deprived me of mine." An appeal so touching would have melted more flinty hearts than those which beat in the bosoms of the Gascons. Many of the magistrates wept aloud, and the President, in a broken voice, entreated the Princess to withdraw, in order that the discussion might be resumed. Still the Parliament, strong in its sense of public duty, shrank from embarking in a rebellion. It was proposed to adjourn the debate, and a mes-

sage was sent to the Princess, requesting her to return to her Palace. But she refused to leave the building while the question at issue remained undecided; and the angry murmurs of the multitude which, agitated by fierce passion, surged through the outer hall, warned the Chamber of the danger of procrastination. At length a decree was passed, by a small majority, that "the Princess of Condé and the Duke of Enghien might reside in the town under the safe-guard of the laws." The result was such as the more prudent councillors had foreseen. Bouillon and La Rochefoucault entered Bordeaux without asking permission. At their instigation the mob attacked and pillaged the house of Lavie, intending to take his life; but he was fortunate enough to escape from their fury in disguise. With the connivance of the majority of the citizens, the Dukes gradually introduced their soldiers into the town, and having thus gained complete command of it, the Parliament was irretrievably committed to a civil war.

It was fortunate for the inhabitants of Bordeaux that they were not exposed alone, and still unprepared for defence, to be crushed by the whole power of the French Crown. At the moment when they raised the standard of insurrection, a

formidable invasion burst across the northern frontiers, and divided the forces of the monarchy. Long and almost incredible mal-administration, and the exhausting efforts of the "Thirty Years' War," had reduced the great Spanish monarchy to the last degree of prostration. Its treasury was bankrupt; its arsenals were empty; a few unarmed vessels of war that lay rotting in its silent dockyards, a few ragged and famished regiments, ill-disciplined, and worse led, represented the invincible Armadas and the superb armies of Philip II. But Castilian pride had spurned the terms of the peace of Munster; and an alluring prospect had now opened upon the Spanish Government of recovering, in a few months, from distracted France, all that had been lost in ten disastrous campaigns. Condé, a name above all others of fear and woe to Spain, was in a French dungeon, and the Southern provinces had risen in arms in his cause. The next in renown of living generals, the skilful Turenne, had arrived at the Court of Brussels, commissioned by a powerful French party to proffer alliance and solicit aid. Even Spanish apathy was roused to turn to account circumstances which promised such sweet revenge and such splendid advantages. The whole force of the Low Countries advanced into Champagne,

under the Archduke Ferdinand and Turenne. Mazarin, emulating the military as well as the literary and artistic tastes of Richelieu, reserved to himself the glory of repelling this inroad; and despatched Marshal la Meilleraie, a brave and skilful commander, with a strong body of troops, to quell the Southern rebellion.

A struggle, memorable in the annals of Bordeaux, now began. The royal forces assailed the town vigorously from without, while faction and tumult, secretly fomented by Bouillon and La Rochefoucault, who were incensed by the unconcealed aversion in which they were held by the Parliament, raged within its walls. But the citizens, full of courage and ardour, admirably organised and admirably led by the Dukes, not only repelled their assailants in several sharp conflicts, but won brilliant success in offensive operations. Epemont having seized and fortified the Island of St. George, a post of great advantage above the city, a body of new levies, trained by Bouillon, stormed the works and made prisoners the Chevalier de Canolles and a garrison of three hundred men. And the prudence, winning manners, and unbounded popularity of the young Princess were constantly employed, with the happiest results, in restoring order and healing

dissensions. The greatest difficulty she had to encounter was want of money. Her resources, and the resources of the Dukes had been completely drained by their first great effort. Wealthy adherents, on whose contributions she had relied, failed her at the last moment. The Parliament had, as yet, given her only lukewarm support; and arbitrarily to tax the citizens, already staggering under the burdens of the war, was too odious an expedient to be thought of. But the army was without pay. In order to extricate herself from her embarrassments, she, by the advice of her council, concluded a treaty of alliance with the King of Spain. The sanction of the Parliament to this treasonable proceeding was despaired of, but the Dukes, with the view of involving the magistrates in its consequences, persuaded her to give public audience to Don Joseph Ozorio, the Ambassador sent to her by his Catholic Majesty.

This hazardous step had well-nigh led to a catastrophe. The magistrates, although carried along by the popular torrent, had, from the beginning, regarded with dislike and apprehension the presence and conduct of the Dukes. This last act of defiance effectually roused their national spirit into energetic opposition. They

were the champions of their country's liberties, not the abettors of its hereditary enemies. Far from falling into the trap laid for them, they passed a decree of outlawry against the Ambassador and all who favoured him. The uncompromising condemnation of the Parliament irritated the Princess's Council, and especially stung the haughty soul of Bouillon. He was skilled, in an unusual degree, in the more dangerous arts of a demagogue, in stirring up the foul dregs which, in times of political disorder, rise from the secret caverns of society to float and fester on its surface, the signs and agents of public calamity. He now wielded the weapons of sedition with terrible effect.

On the second day after that on which the obnoxious decree was passed, an armed mob, breathing vengeance, surrounded the Palace of Justice. The Parliament, seeing itself in imminent danger of being massacred, sent pressing messages to Bouillon and La Rochefoucault, imploring them to still the tumult they had raised; but the Dukes refused to interfere. An appeal was then made to the Princess, who had been left in ignorance of the commotion. She instantly hurried to the scene of danger. Her appearance somewhat calmed the fury of the multitude; and, passing

through a lane hedged by dense masses of human beings, whom senseless rage had changed into wild beasts, she entered the House of Assembly, and entreated the magistrates to rescind their decree. These brave men scorned to purchase their lives at the price of dishonour. She returned to the mob and besought it to disperse. The mob replied by an angry roar of imprecation and menace, hoarse and confused as the raving of the sea. While she vainly tried argument and supplication, the measured tramp of a military force announced the advance of the city train-bands to rescue the magistrates. In a few moments the cries and the crash of a fierce conflict rose upon the air. The horrors of a fratricidal struggle, perhaps the destruction of the city, were averted by an act of sublime courage on the part of the Princess. Turning to her attendants, she bade those who loved her follow her, and threw herself between the hostile ranks. A hundred swords, some of them already crimsoned with blood, clashed around her; but the humane feeling that rendered her fearless, seemed to render her invulnerable. The combatants, touched by her prayers and her self-devotion, paused. A moment's respite was sufficient to allow outraged reason to resume her empire; to allow the fearful conse-

quences of their suicidal frenzy to flash upon the minds of all. Claire skilfully seized this moment of horror and remorse, and persuaded the repentant multitude to disperse quietly to their homes. On the following day Don Joseph Ozorio departed from Bordeaux; and, as the pressure of hostilities began to be felt, the Parliament, alarmed for the safety of the city, gave the Princess more cordial support, and sent deputies to solicit the intervention of the Parliament of Paris.

Meanwhile the Regent and Cardinal Mazarin had advanced into Champagne to oppose the Archduke Ferdinand and Turenne. But the campaign was bloodless. The military talents of the great French General were rendered of no avail by the slow incapacity of the Archduke and the deplorable condition of the Spanish army. Having wasted some weeks in fruitless demonstrations, the Spaniards retired ingloriously across the frontier.

The Minister was now at liberty to turn his whole attention to domestic troubles. The revolt of Bordeaux was hourly assuming a more alarming aspect for the Court. The eyes of the whole kingdom were rivetted by the extraordinary spectacle of a young Princess, without the slightest political knowledge or experience, hitherto an

object of compassion or of contempt in the exclusive circles to which she was known, suddenly, as it seemed, endowed by the spirit of love with all the attributes of Minerva, leading conquering armies, ruling councils of astute politicians, swaying popular assemblies, in a cause that appealed most directly to the sympathies of every Frenchman—the cause of a wife and mother, in arms to save her young son, to extricate her illustrious husband from the toils of a crafty foreign adventurer. The tide of public feeling, ever subject to rapid changes among a sensitive and high-spirited people, had set in strongly in her favour. The adherents of the Princes, lately cowed and powerless, were raising their heads in all parts of the kingdom. The alliance between the Court and the Fronde was growing cold, and De Retz appeared to have accomplished the miracle of fixing in his own interests the unstable purposes of Gaston of Orleans. The Parliament of Paris gave a fraternal welcome to the deputation from the Parliament of Bordeaux, and showed a decided disposition to take part with the citizens against the Duke of Epemon. There was little doubt but that the other great judicial bodies of the kingdom would follow the lead of the Parliament of Paris. Mazarin saw that the rebellion was a

flame which, if not promptly extinguished, would consume him. Collecting all available reinforcements, he put himself at their head, and reaching Guienne by rapid marches, assumed the direction of the war. The Queen, taking with her Mademoiselle de Montpensier as a hostage for the fidelity of the Lieutenant-General, followed at a little distance the movements of the army.

The first operation of the Cardinal was to lay siege to the Castle of Vayres on the Dordogne. Its commander, a valiant bourgeois of Bordeaux, named Richon, made an obstinate defence, but the place fell, through the treachery of one of the garrison. In order to strike terror into the insurgents, Mazarin ordered Richon to be hanged as a traitor. He also gave directions that the Chateau of Verteuil, in Poitou, the ancient and magnificent seat of the Dukes of la Rochefoucault, with its unique literary and artistic treasures, and its proud historical memorials, should be burned to the ground. It was among the most cherished recollections of the illustrious family of La Rochefoucault that the Emperor Charles V. had been entertained at Verteuil, and had said on parting from his host, "he had never entered a house which showed more of grandeur, courtesy, and virtue." The present Duke, himself one of

the brightest ornaments of his line, received the tidings of his irreparable loss with composure, merely remarking that it was another sacrifice for the adorable Madame de Longueville. But the barbarous policy of the minister had a precisely opposite effect from that intended by its author. The indignation it aroused bound together all classes in Bordeaux in cordial union for the defence of the city; and it provoked instant reprisals. The tears and prayers of the Princess saved the three hundred prisoners, captured in the Island of St. George, from the vengeance of the populace, but a council of war unanimously decreed the immediate execution of the Chevalier de Canolles. The popular manners and brilliant social qualities of the unfortunate Canolles had made him a general favourite. Being allowed free range of the town on parole, he was the soul of all festive gatherings, and the news of his sentence was brought to him while feasting in gay *abandon* with a party of friends. He heard the announcement with a smile, believing it to be a jest. Claire strove hard to obtain for him a reprieve, or at least a short respite from his doom, hoping to contrive his escape from the city. But her Council was inexorable, the stern laws of war and the public anger imperatively demanding a victim.

The Chevalier was led out to death without even being permitted to see a minister of religion. The people would not suffer such unprofitable delay; they said that, "being a Mazarin, he must necessarily be damned."

The Duke of Bouillon also ordered the demolition of the country house of the Archbishop of Bordeaux. These vigorous measures of retaliation not only put a stop to military executions, but seem to have arrested the unfinished work of destruction at Verteuil.

The Royal Army next attacked the Island of St. George. The garrison, consisting of twelve hundred picked men, finding themselves cut off from communication with Bordeaux by batteries, which Marshal la Meilleraie planted along the banks of the Garonne, lost heart, and surrendered after a feeble resistance. All the approaches of the city were now in possession of the Royalists.

The Bordelais had made incredible efforts to put their town in an efficient state of defence. The impediments were, in truth, such as only the most resolute and persevering courage could overcome. A very short time had sufficed to show the value of the vaunting professions of Spain. The absolute ruler of the magnificent empire upon which the sun never set was unable

to aid them with a single musket or a single doubloon. Their military chest was empty. The Princess had pawned her last jewel. The pay of the army was months in arrear. The ancient fortifications of the city had crumbled into ruin. Skilled engineers and the material of war were wanted for the creating and the arming of new ramparts. But the extraordinary popularity of the Princess, the enthusiasm and high military qualities of the Gascons, the energy and example of the Dukes, and, more than all, the fertile genius of Bouillon, supplied every deficiency.

The weakest point in the approaches to the city, and the most exposed to attack, was the Faubourg St. Surin, leading to the gate of Dijeaux. This Faubourg was formed by one or two open streets, and contained the Archbishop's palace, and the ruins of a Roman amphitheatre, said to have been built by the Emperor Gallienus. Bouillon, seeing the danger of allowing it to be occupied by the Royalists, spared no pains in fortifying it; and he was seconded by the citizens with untiring zeal. The whole population, without distinction of rank, age, or sex, turned out to labour at the works. Claire, her ladies, and the little Duke of Enghien shared the toils and dangers of the meanest citizen. Defences sprang

up as if by enchantment. The streets were closed by strong barricades. The buildings on either side were converted into fortresses, loop-holed and garrisoned. Practised marksmen swarmed in the adjacent vine-yards; and out of a heap of rubbish accumulated before the gate of Dijeaux, Bouillon, with admirable skill, constructed a half-moon.

As the Duke had foreseen, Marshal la Meilleraie, renowned for success in sieges, selected the Faubourg St. Surin as the chief point of attack. Choice troops, with strong supports, advanced to the assault, under the eye of Cardinal Mazarin. A withering fire in front and flank staggered the foremost columns, but, quickly re-forming under cover of their artillery, they charged the barricades. They were met with equal resolution, and for many hours the combat raged, furious with all the merciless fury of civil war. Through the ruined amphitheatre, through the crashing vine-yards, through the shattered barricades, the crimson tide of battle rolled and ebbed. Soon a thick pall of smoke, rent by flashing bolts of death, and lurid with the glare of burning houses, partially shrouded the horrors of the scene. But the ringing volleys of musketry, the tramp and clash of charging ranks, the fierce cries of the combatants,

the groans of the dying, blent together in all the maddening tumult of battle, pierced the sulphurous war-cloud, and bore tidings to the women and the old men, who with straining eyes and ghastly faces crowded every roof and steeple of the city, of the stern animosity and varying fortunes of the fight. On this bloody day the Gascons well maintained their ancient renown. They repulsed with terrible slaughter six successive assaults of the Royal troops, the soldiers of Rocroi and Lens, trained to victory by Condé and Turenne. And never did the Gascon annals, rich as they are in great deeds of arms and in lives of famous captains, embalm the fame of leaders more worthy of a gallant people. Wherever the danger gathered thickest, wherever the spirit of the defenders, oppressed by superior numbers, was seen to flag, wherever their closing ranks rushed with new ardour upon the foe, there, conspicuous to all, animating and sustaining all, was the impetuous courage of La Rochefoucault, or the serene intrepidity of Bouillon. It was only in the evening, when, thinned by carnage and faint with toil, that an overwhelming onset of fresh troops drove back the Bordelais into their town. On the following day La Meilleraie pushed his operations against the half-moon before the gate

of Dijeaux. It was a feeble out-work, only six feet high, and hastily constructed out of a dung heap. But its defence illustrated well the old Spartan maxim, that courage is stronger than stone walls. Day after day carefully chosen storming parties, thrown by the Marshal against this frail barrier, were flung back in utter rout, leaving pyramids of their slain as ghastly monuments of the indomitable valour of the citizens. After thirteen days of incessant fighting it became evident to the Royalist generals that, in order to reduce the city speedily, it would be necessary to resort to a bombardment.

But Cardinal Mazarin was naturally averse to extreme measures; and he knew that, in destroying such a flourishing commercial mart, he would deal a fatal blow at the prosperity of France, and heap everlasting odium upon himself. The critical situation of his affairs, however, rendered an immediate termination of the civil war of the last moment to him. Turenne, beating and outmanœuvring two French Marshals, had made a rapid march, at the head of a body of cavalry, upon Vincennes, with the design of surprising the castle and releasing the Princes. Gaston of Orleans, who, as Lieutenant General of the Kingdom, had remained in the direction of affairs at

Paris, removed his cousins in time. But instead of transferring them to Havre, as the Court desired, he placed them in the Castle of Marcoussy, which belonged to the Count of Entragues, an adherent of his own. The Regent and Cardinal Mazarin learned, with equal mortification and alarm, that their prisoners had passed from their control. Orleans had become the mere puppet of the Minister's most dangerous rival, De Retz; and the custody of Condé made the factious and weak-minded Duke arbiter of France. The Parliament of Paris had sent deputies to mediate between the Government and the Parliament of Bordeaux, and was hourly falling into a less compliant mood. The Spaniards were again in strength on the northern frontier. A resort to the extremities of war, and a prolonged siege, seemed alike to be fraught with disastrous consequences for the Cardinal. "The affair," he said, "was a thistle which pricked on every side." He extricated himself from his dilemma with great address.

In feigned deference to the authority of the Parliament of Paris, he allowed their commissioners to open negotiations with the citizens of Bordeaux, and to intimate that he was disposed to grant favourable terms of peace. The Bordelais, on their part, were well inclined to an

honourable accommodation. The struggle had already overtaxed their resources. They felt their inability to sustain, single-handed, a protracted contest against the Crown; and the aid which they had been led to expect from the Duke of la Force and other powerful neighbours had failed them. But what influenced them most was the consideration that the vintage season had set in. A little longer delay, and the whole of the year's produce of the vineyards, in which their wealth consisted, would be spoiled. An honourable reluctance to fail in their engagements with the Princess and the Dukes alone caused them to hesitate. But Claire and her Council, with great magnanimity, voluntarily released them from their pledges, and requested them to consult only their own interests. The Gascons were incapable of abusing this generosity. To insist on the liberation of the Princes would be useless, but the envoys despatched by the city to the royal camp were instructed to guard the interests of its allies as jealously as its own. The magistrates from Paris assumed the functions of arbitrators, and, after a few conferences, a treaty containing the most indulgent conditions for the insurgents was signed. It stipulated that the Princess should enjoy all her revenues unmolested, and should,

moreover, for her security, be allowed to garrison Montrond with one hundred and fifty men at the public expense; that the confederate nobles should be received into favour, and restored to the estates, honours, and employments they had possessed at the breaking out of the war; and that a general amnesty should be proclaimed. It was also agreed, but in order to save the dignity of the Crown, by a secret article, that the Duke of Epemon should be recalled, and a Governor, approved by the citizens, appointed in his stead. Thus ended the famous war of Bordeaux.

The Princess and the Dukes immediately prepared to quit the city in which they had won so much renown. Before her departure Claire distributed all her remaining funds for the relief of the wounded and destitute officers of her party. The Parliament, as a public mark of the love and veneration of the citizens, redeemed, and by their affectionate importunity, forced her to accept the jewels she had pawned during the difficulties of the war. She was privately assured that, when the grapes had been gathered in, Bordeaux would again declare in favour of her husband. The whole population escorted her to the beautiful galley presented to her by the city, in which she was to ascend the river on her way to Courtras.

As the fairy vessel, bounding over the bright waters of the Garonne, bore her weeping from the scene of her glory, farewell cheers, mingled with sobs and loud lamentations, spoke the grief and love of the Gascons.

On her voyage she was met by Marshal la Meilleraie, who invited her to pay a visit to the Regent, at Bourg, a village at the mouth of the Dordogne, where the Court had resided during the siege. She consented, though with reluctance. She was ill and dispirited; she knew the haughty, unforgiving temper of Anne of Austria; but she scrupled to cast away even the faintest chance of serving her husband. The whole Court crowded forth to see the heroine it had so lately despised, and with whose fame all France was ringing. The Regent received her in a private audience, at which the young King, Mademoiselle de Montpensier, and Cardinal Mazarin were present. Mademoiselle de Montpensier has left us in her memoirs a graphic, but most unfriendly description of what passed. With ungenerous malice, she ridicules the woe-stricken appearance and the negligent toilette of the young Princess. But the unconcealed partiality of the "Grande Mademoiselle" for Condé, led her to dislike and disparage Condé's wife; and more impartial ob-

servers bear testimony to the gentle dignity and affecting demeanour of the object of her jealous scorn. Without deigning to notice Mazarin, Claire knelt before the Regent, humbly entreating that her husband might be restored to liberty. Anne of Austria returned a cold and somewhat ungracious answer, and the interview terminated. The Cardinal immediately afterwards paid Claire a visit, and met with a chilling reception. He, however, had long and confidential discussions with Bouillon, La Rochefoucault, and Lenet on the state of public affairs, but could not be induced to give a definite pledge to release the captive Princes. During these fruitless negotiations the Princess resumed her interrupted journey to Courtras, whence, after a short delay, she proceeded to Montrond. The party at Bourg soon separated. The Court moved forward for the public entry of the sovereigns into Bordeaux. Bouillon retired to Auvergne, and La Rochefoucault turned his steps to Poitou, to mourn over the blackened ruins of his venerable chateau.

It is not often that the critical judgment of posterity ratifies the verdict of contemporary enthusiasm so completely as in the case of the young Princess of Condé. History affords few examples of such sterling and various excellence

as Claire de Maillé Brezé exhibited during her brief appearance on the political stage. Her cause was the most sacred of all causes for a woman, and was politically just; the imprisonment of Condé, however criminal his conduct, being manifestly illegal. Of her measures to vindicate it, that which alone at that anarchical period was open to censure, the Spanish alliance, must fairly be ascribed to the overruling influence of her council. Wherever her own noble nature had free play, her actions excite only admiration. Her modest wisdom, her unselfish courage, her marvellous eloquence, her magnanimous spirit, ever soaring above the rage of ignoble passions, and the conflict of petty interests, her womanly virtues, softening with their tender poetry the horrors of civil war, blooming so freshly and sweetly in the unwholesome atmosphere of a corrupt society, and the cold shadow of conjugal neglect, combine to form one of the brightest and loveliest of those pictures of feminine worth upon which the eye lingers with delight, amidst so much that is tawdry and so much that is repulsive in the long dim galleries of history.

## CHAPTER III.

WE left Condé, Conti, and Longueville in the prison fortress of Vincennes on the night that followed their arrest. Their imprisonment was of the severest character. They had for jailor the *Sieur de Bar*, a rude, harsh soldier, who guarded them with the most jealous vigilance, having pledged his word to the Regent to stab Condé to the heart rather than permit him to escape. Seven soldiers kept watch over them night and day, the descent of the Duke of Beaufort from the same donjon keep into the moat beneath, a feat which had been supposed to require the wings of a bird, showing the need of extraordinary precautions. The entertainment provided for them by the Regent was of the most frugal description. They were required to supply themselves with everything beyond the bare necessities of life at their own charge. Condé angrily refused to give

any orders to his steward, saying he would rather starve. When his resolve was reported to the Regent, she said, with sarcastic composure, "Let him starve then," and for some days the Princes lived on the coarse prison fare. But Longueville, who was not a hero, and did not feel called upon to assume the character, soon tired of aggravating the hardships of his lot, and undertook, much to Condé's secret satisfaction, the office of caterer. Intelligence of the condition of the prisoners occasionally got abroad through a physician named Dalencé, who was permitted to pay them periodical visits. Conti passed his days and nights in prayer and lamentation. Longueville, when not racked by gout, was generally moody and silent, sunk in the torpor of despair. Condé sang, swore, heard mass, played at battledoor and shuttlecock, dined with an excellent appetite, and reared flowers. When Conti asked in piteous tones for the "Imitation of Christ," Condé shouted for an imitation of the Duke of Beaufort. One day during the war of Bordeaux, Dalencé found the elder Prince cultivating pinks on the terrace of the donjon, and narrated to him the events of the siege. "Who would have believed," said the hero of Rocroi, "that my wife would wage war while I watered my garden!"

The friends of the prisoners, and especially Madame de Longueville, were unceasingly occupied in contriving the means of their escape and secret methods of communication. The crown pieces which the Regent permitted her captives to receive for play, were scooped out, and made vehicles of intelligence. Bottles of wine, with false bottoms, served the same purpose. A crutch destined to support the feeble steps of Conti contained a rapier for his warlike brother. The chief agent of Madame de Longueville was Gourville, one of the most extraordinary of the many eminent adventurers who achieved political distinction in that eventful age. Gourville had begun life as a lackey of the Duke of la Rochefoucault, and had risen from this menial station to be the confidential secretary and councillor of his ambitious and keen-witted master. His advancement allowed him scope for the display of capacity, courage, and adroitness which soon won for him an unrivalled reputation in the conduct of difficult and hazardous enterprises; and his curious memoirs give us pictures of the personages and events of the time hardly inferior in interest and value to those of La Rochefoucault himself. During one of his visits to the neighbourhood of Vincennes, Gourville found means to gain over three of the seven soldiers who guarded

Condé. It was arranged that on a certain Sunday afternoon, while De Bar was attending Vespers, the Prince and his accomplices should fall on the four other guards, disarm and gag them, and, by means of a rope, descend into the castle moat. Gourville undertook to have a body of horsemen in readiness to receive the fugitives and convey them to a place of safety. This was not a more difficult achievement than the escape of the Duke of Beaufort. But on the eve of its proposed execution one of the soldiers who had been suborned was seized with remorse. Entering a church in Paris, he delivered a paper containing hints of the plot to a priest engaged in one of the confessionals. The priest at once forwarded the document to the Coadjutor, whose lynx-eyed suspicion divined the truth. Without losing a moment he caused the guards at Vincennes to be changed, and sent Beaufort to scour the adjacent country with a strong force of cavalry. Though thus mysteriously baffled, Gourville was not disheartened. He had almost matured another promising scheme for the liberation of the captives, when their sudden removal to Marcoussy disconcerted his plans.

Marcoussy was a strong and commodious castle, seated on an island in the middle of a lake within a few leagues' distance of Paris. It was here that

Henry IV. had wooed Henriette d'Entragues, to whose family the castle belonged. Being a private residence as well as a fortress, it allowed greater facilities of escape than Vincennes, and the Princes, though still attended by De Bar, found themselves under less severe restraint. Their friends did not fail to avail themselves of this favourable change of circumstances. A Marechal de Camp, named Arnaud, caused a boat to be constructed of boiled leather, which, admitting of being rolled up in a small compass, might be conveyed to the shore of the lake without attracting observation. He engaged to paddle across in the night to the base of the castle wall. The fidelity of a soldier of the garrison had been corrupted; and, with this man's assistance, the Princes were to slay the other guards as they slept, and let themselves down into the boat. A strong party of armed gentlemen, and the means of a rapid flight to Condé's town of Stenay, awaited them on the opposite shore. The preparations for this daring enterprise were completed, and it was on the point of being executed, when the hopes of the prisoners were again dashed by the unexpected arrival of the Count of Harcourt with an order for their instant removal to the Citadel of Havre.

The unbroken silence in which the Regent and Cardinal Mazarin were received by the inhabitants of Bordeaux, on the occasion of their public entry into that city, after the termination of the war, offered little inducement to them to prolong their absence from the Capital, where the perilous condition of affairs urgently demanded their presence. Turenne and the Spaniards had again invaded the Northern Provinces. The independent action of the Duke of Orleans, in transferring his cousins to Marcoussy, and in opening unauthorised negotiations with the Archduke Leopold, and the recent hostile attitude of the Parliament of Paris, furnished the Government with grave causes of anxiety and alarm. The Regent, thinking that she saw the hand of the Coadjutor in the unfriendly proceedings of Orleans and the Magistrates, was deeply incensed against that prelate, and hurried back to repair the evils effected by his policy. She was detained on the way for some weeks by a dangerous illness, but, when sufficiently recovered to resume her journey, she wrote to the Lieutenant-General, inviting him to meet her at Fontainebleau. De Retz and Madame de Chevreuse, foreseeing the result of the interview, implored the Duke to excuse himself from compliance. But the courage of Gaston was un-

equal to an act of formal disobedience. Anne of Austria's agents skilfully soothed his fears, and after pitiable vacillation, he set out in great trepidation of mind for Fontainebleau, having first fortified his spirits by passing his word to De Retz under no circumstances to consent to the removal of the captive Princes from Marcoussy.

On the night of Orleans' arrival the Regent invited him to a private conference. The cowardly Prince was like wax in her hands. In an hour she had wrung from him an order for the surrender of his cousins to her own keeping, and curtly dismissed him to repose. Relieved from the immediate influence of the terrible spell with which her strong nature enthralled his, and left to his own reflections, Gaston passed the rest of the night distracted by rage, fear and shame. At break of day he called for pistols and a horse, and galloping forth like one demented, wandered for hours through the forest, lost in a stupor of contending emotions. On his return, he sought Mazarin, complained bitterly of the unfair stress placed upon his inclinations by the Regent, and demanded back the order. The Cardinal was blandness itself, and sent to summon an Under-Secretary of State, into whose hands the document had been passed. By one of those happy mischances which

the Minister found so convenient, the Under Secretary could not be discovered until late in the day. It then appeared, as Mazarin informed Gaston with expressions of lively regret, that the order had been at once despatched to the new Governor of Normandy, the Count of Harcourt, a distinguished cadet of the House of Guise, and a zealous adherent of the Government, with instructions to escort the prisoners to the Citadel of Havre, which the Duchess of Richelieu, now in high favour at Court, had placed at the disposal of the Regent. The same day saw Condé and his brothers on their way to their new prison, the secure strength of which shut out from them all further hope of freedom. Condé bore this cruel stroke of fortune with his usual equanimity, relieving his disappointment and the tedium of the journey by composing the following well-known lines on the celebrated soldier who had him in custody.

Cet homme gros et court  
Si fameux dans l'histoire  
Ce grand Comte d'Harcourt  
Tout rayonnant de gloire.  
Qui secourut Casal, et qui reprit Turin  
Est maintenant recors de Jules Mazarin.

A load of care was now lifted from the mind of Mazarin. The formidable captive, the dread foreboding of whose restoration to freedom, without

his concurrence, had for months oppressed him like a nightmare, was again in his own hands. His arch-enemy, the Coadjutor, was baffled and apparently powerless; rebellion was extinguished; and the Parliament of Paris, gratified by the part it had played during the war of Bordeaux, seemed inclined to rest from agitation. It appeared to the Regent that she might now safely indulge her long-smothered antipathy, and break with De Retz. Madame de Chevreuse, who had followed Orleans to Fontainebleau in order to keep him steady to his pledge, made a formal application for the Cardinal's hat which had been promised to the Coadjutor. The Regent referred the matter to the Council of State, and, taking advantage of the unexpected opposition of Chateauneuf, positively declined to fulfil her engagement. Mazarin then earnestly counselled her not to return to Paris until the young King had attained his majority, or at least to fix her residence in the Louvre, which was strong enough to repel the assaults of an insurgent rabble, and afforded convenient egress to the country. But Anne of Austria, depressed by ill-health, luxurious in her habits, and insensible to fear, sighed for the distractions of the Capital, and could not be persuaded to exchange the ease and splendour of the Palais

Royal for the cheerless discomfort of the Louvre. The Cardinal accompanied her back to Paris, but, after a short stay, set out for Champagne to oppose Turenne and the Spaniards. He carried his fortunes with him. His presence with the French army ushered in a most brilliant campaign. Rhetel was taken before the eyes of Turenne. The Spanish army was routed in a decisive battle; its great Commander escaped from the field with only one hundred and fifty horse; and in a few days not an enemy was left in arms on the soil of France. Mazarin returned again to Paris, victorious over all his foes. Never had his position in France appeared so lofty and so secure. But it was in reality undermined by a secret cabal, which all his craft had failed to penetrate, and a single false move might send it crashing into ruin.

The three parties which distracted the State, the Old Fronde, of which De Retz, Beaufort, and Madame de Chevreuse were the leading spirits; the adherents of the imprisoned Princes, who styled themselves the New Fronde; and the Court party, popularly known as Mazarins, were at this time not unequally represented in the Parliament of Paris. The advocates of the Princes, though numerically the weakest section, possessed a great

superiority in moral power, for they were countenanced by Molé, De Mesmes, and Omer Talon, who were the glory of the Assembly; staunch supporters of the Royal Authority within the limits fixed by the Declaration of October, but also faithful guardians of the constitution. The cordial union of any two of these parties controlled the Decrees of the High Court, and must, so long as the power of the Crown was placed in partial abeyance by a Royal minority, have a decisive political effect. Common hatred and fear of Condé had produced the extraordinary coalition between the Court and the Fronde, between faction and authority, which resulted in his overthrow. The popular voice had applauded the League; the Regent and Mazarin loaded their new allies with favours and caresses; De Retz was ostensibly admitted to the most secret counsels of the Government; Madame de Chevreuse seemed to resume her old place in the heart of her mistress; Beaufort again swaggered in the Royal Presence Chamber, and in the first fever of joy and triumph deep-rooted enmities and jarring interests appeared to be buried in oblivion. But this unnatural alliance could not be permanent. Only the strong motive of self-preservation could have compelled such antagonistic elements into a

momentary cohesion. When the pressure was relaxed, they flew asunder from an inherent principle of repulsion. It would have been as consistent with the laws of nature for two suns to shine in the same firmament, as for Mazarin and De Retz to rule in harmony; and each was devoured by the ambition to be Prime Minister of France. Contrary to the wishes and intentions of his confederates, the wily Italian, strong in the unalterable attachment of Anne of Austria, reaped all the real advantages of the coalition. But as his authority again grew manifestly predominant, the popular favour ebbed from him with increasing rapidity. By the same movement it flowed towards his captives. The gallant defence of Bordeaux aroused general sympathy for Condé's wife and son. The misfortunes of the hero of whom they had been so proud touched the heart of a martial and generous people. The besieger of Paris, the fiery enemy of popular rights, the selfish dictator, were forgotten in the Great Captain who had so well avenged the defeats of Pavia and St. Quentin. This revulsion of public feeling was watched with the keenest interest by De Retz. It was with unutterable rage and shame that the haughty prelate found that, notwithstanding his brilliant genius and his unrivalled talents for

intrigue, he was miserably duped by the unscrupulous artifice of his rival. His nomination by the Crown for a Cardinal's hat, the splendid reward for which he had consented to exalt Mazarin to such a height of power, was first evaded, and afterwards flatly refused, on insulting pretexts ; while the support he afforded the Minister sensibly diminished the popular favour upon which his own power was based. He knew that the establishment of a strong executive was incompatible with the existence of an authority springing from the fierce play of revolutionary passions ; that its first care would be to crush the spirit of faction which, like some potent magician of Eastern story, he had evoked to minister to his behests. Without, therefore, at all sharing in the new-born sympathy for the imprisoned Princes which pervaded men's minds, self-interest and revenge prompted him to listen eagerly to the suggestion of a coalition between the Old and the New Fronde for the liberation of the captives and the overthrow of Mazarin.

The idea of this new political combination originated in the teeming brain of Anne of Gonzaga, the Princess Palatine. In an age strongly coloured by the influence of female celebrities, as remarkable for brilliant intellectual gifts and

beauty as for easy profligacy of life, Anne of Gonzaga was pre-eminently distinguished by her political talents, her wit, and her eccentric galantries. The birth and connexions of this extraordinary woman were illustrious. Her father, the Duke of Mantua and Nevers, had been expelled from his Italian principality by the Spaniards on account of his French extraction, and restored by the arms and policy of Richelieu. Mary of Gonzaga, her sister, some years before one of the brightest ornaments of the Court of France, and the prize for which the aspiring Cinq-Mars rashly staked his fortunes and his life, was now Queen of Poland. Her own husband was a younger son of the unfortunate King of Bohemia and Elizabeth Stuart. The story of her amour with the Duke of Guise, as related by Mademoiselle de Montpensier, affords an amusing view of one side of her character.

Guise, the representative of the historic family which above all others had linked its name in imperishable renown with the great events and the mournful tragedies of the stormiest and most eventful century of modern history, was himself a prodigy. He was a living anachronism, a knight-errant instinct with the adventurous spirit of the 11th century, flung, as it were, by some

convulsion of the moral order, into the age of Louis XIV. Some of his enterprises might have adorned a page in the History of Amadis de Gaul; all of them were more or less tinged with the hues of romance. He lived the life of Sir Launcelot at a time when even what was most admirable in chivalry was withering under the immortal satire of Cervantes. Yet, like so many of the mediæval barons, he united to his passion for the marvellous considerable practical ability. During the most notable period of his career, while he was engaged at Naples, after the downfall of Massaniello, in endeavouring to fix on his own head the crown of the Two Sicilies, he displayed talents for government of no mean order. But the tone of his mind lent to everything he did a ridiculous air of exaggeration; and his countrymen, discriminating between splendid and fantastic exploits, have styled Guise the Hero of Romance, Condé the Hero of History.

This extraordinary nobleman was titular Archbishop of Rheims. His episcopal dignity, however, sat lightly upon him. He paid his vows at the shrine of beauty with all the fervour of the joyous chivalry of Languedoc in the days of the Troubadours. His brilliant qualities, his

romantic wooing, and the resistless spell which daring deeds fling around the imaginations of women, enslaved the sensitive heart of Anne of Gonzaga. But, alas! the inconstancy of man! Guise, growing tired of his conquest, quitted Paris rather unceremoniously, and went to Brussels. The Princess pursued him, disguised in male attire; but, finding the chase hopeless, she assumed a less questionable shape, publicly announced her marriage with her truant lover, and styled herself Madame de Guise. Unfortunately for the success of this decorous fiction, Guise, with strange perversity, precipitately espoused another lady. The Princess bore his ingratitude with the composure of a stoic, quietly resumed her maiden style and dignity, and, as Mademoiselle de Montpensier says, returned to Paris as though nothing had happened.

But, to an irregular fancy, the Princess Palatine united not only rare capacity, but a generous heart. She had conceived an enthusiastic admiration for Condé, and the Regent had given her just cause of dissatisfaction. In order to extricate her hero, she laboured with consummate skill to form a political combination, which would have appeared chimerical, if it were not that, in the words of La Rochefoucault, "all things happen in

France." It soon became manifest that her toil was not fruitless. The young Princess of Condé came up to Paris to supplicate the intervention of Parliament against the illegal detention of her husband. Her petition, which was drawn up by Molé in terms flattering to the self-esteem of the Magistrates, met with no opposition from the adherents of De Retz, and a day was appointed for taking it into consideration. After this first successful move the Princess Palatine proposed, at the suggestion of the Coadjutor and Madame de Chevreuse, that a formal treaty of alliance should be concluded between Condé and the Fronde, the terms to be specified in writing and signed by accredited representatives of the contracting parties. The conditions were, the thorough co-operation of the Fronde, in vigorous efforts to wrest the Princes from the clutches of the Government; the services of the party to be requited by Condé, in the event of success, by the marriage of Mademoiselle de Chevreuse with the Prince of Conti, the obtaining of a red hat for De Retz, and the gift of one hundred thousand crowns to Beaufort's rapacious mistress, Madame de Montbazon.

Circumstances favoured Anne of Gonzaga's proposal. The affecting death of the Dowager

Princess of Condé and the triumphant return of Mazarin from his campaign against Turenne occurring almost at the same moment, supplied the strongest incentives of grief, fear, and hatred to second her arguments. But La Rochefoucault, who was commissioned by Madame de Longueville to represent her family in the negotiations, hesitated to accept the treaty. He detested De Retz, and considered it more for the advantage of the prisoners to come to an arrangement with Mazarin, who could, by a word, restore them to freedom. During the conferences at Bourg, after the war of Bordeaux, the marriage of Conti with the Countess Martinozzi had been hinted at as a means of terminating the feud between Condé and the Minister. There is no doubt that Mazarin was ready to sacrifice much for the honour of an alliance with the House of Bourbon. But the project had been indignantly scouted by Condé when suggested to him through the physician Dalencé. The Prince declared he would rather remain a prisoner all his life than purchase freedom on such degrading terms. Still the amicable professions of the Cardinal had left La Rochefoucault ground for hope that a reconciliation was not impossible; and, before giving an answer to the Princess Palatine, he paid several midnight visits to the Palais Royal to urge the

Minister to consent to an immediate accommodation. He even disclosed to the Cardinal, so far as he could do so without betraying the secret of the new coalition, the formidable perils that must attend further hesitation. But Mazarin, though proof against the arts of deceit, was the easy dupe of plain dealing. A suspicion that an antagonist might be honest never seems to have crossed his mind. He considered the gulf which mutual injuries had dug between Condé and the leaders of the Fronde to be eternal, and he could not believe in the reality of danger so frankly announced. To the prophetic warning with which La Rochefoucault reluctantly closed their last interview he answered with incredulous badinage; and the Duke, proceeding straight to the Hotel of the Princess Palatine, accepted the conditions of the Fronde on behalf of the imprisoned Princes.

In order to give the highest prestige and the stamp of legitimate authority to the Coalition, it only remained to obtain the formal adhesion of the Lieutenant-General of the Kingdom. This, however, was no easy matter. Orleans, though loud in his denunciation of the means by which his consent to the removal of his cousins to Havre had been extorted, and liberal of promises, shrank

from the act of signing the treaty with ludicrous terror. His secretary, Caumartin, a creature of De Retz, followed him about for several days with the document in one pocket, an ink-stand in another, and a pen behind his ear. Gaston, with that fine sense of danger with which the weaker animals are gifted, either avoided being alone, or, by irregular movements, rapid divings through intricate passages, forced marches along remote lobbies, and skilful stratagems that baffled all probable calculations as to time and place, eluded the pursuit. Such an elaborate system of strategy as he practised to confound and vanquish his secretary, if applied to war or politics, would have established his fame as a warrior or a statesman. At last the wily Caumartin suddenly disappeared from the scene of operations, leaving his master to enjoy his hard-won repose. Over security, which has so often lost the fruits of the most profound combinations and the most signal success, proved fatal to Gaston. As he was proceeding incautiously, in the excusable exultation of victory, from one room to another, he fell into an ambuscade. Caumartin lay in wait for him between the double doors, and, springing forward, placed the pen between his fingers and offered his own back as a

writing-desk. The Duke accepted his fate without further resistance, and, after the manner of an ancient Roman falling on his sword, signed the treaty with averted eyes.

The first move of the confederates proclaimed the existence of the new alliance. On the day appointed for the consideration of the Princess of Condé's petition in the Palace of Justice, the Old and the New Fronde gave it their united support. Orleans deserted the Court, and a decree was passed by an immense majority that a deputation of the Magistrates, headed by their First President, should proceed to the Palais Royal, and pray the Regent to set the Princes at liberty. The news of the proceedings in the High Court fell like a thunder clap on the ears of Mazarin, awaking him from his dream of security to shudder at the abyss which had suddenly opened beneath his feet. For the first time since the commencement of the Regency, he found arrayed against him the Princes of the Blood, the great nobles, the Parliament of Paris, and the leading demagogues; and that too in a cause which was just, popular, and fortified by the sanction of the Lieutenant-General of the kingdom. Hitherto he had with difficulty found safety in the dissensions of his enemies. Now, quailing before the

hatred of all classes, and only able to rely for support on the uncertain authority of a Queen Regent—like himself a foreigner—he had to confront a league which might have appalled the bold genius of Richelieu, though armed with all the power and prestige of an absolute King. There was one move which might have checkmated his foes, and it was expected by De Retz with the keenest anxiety. This was for the Regent to quit Paris at once with the young King. The armies were commanded by able generals devoted to Mazarin. The provinces were governed by his adherents. The strength of the coalition lay in the Capital. Safe beyond its walls with Anne of Austria and her son, and having Condé in his hands, he might set at defiance the decrees of the Parliament and the anger of Monsieur. In less than a year Louis would attain his fourteenth year, when, by the laws of France, he entered upon the full exercise of the Royal authority. As the young King was passionately attached to his mother, this event, while terminating the Regency, must bring to her, and, as a consequence, to the Minister, a vast increase of power; would render armed opposition, which during a minority was regarded as legitimate, or at the worst venial, a political crime of the deepest dye. But Anne of

Austria could not be induced to leave the Palais Royal. Her physical energies were still depressed from recent illness. Holding Orleans in supreme contempt, and feeling assured of her ability to make him again her pliant instrument, she underrated the gravity of the crisis, and preferred to brave its perils rather than endure the discomfort of exile from the Capital.

In these circumstances Mazarin's position demanded the exercise of consummate prudence, and of all the wary and patient craft of which he was a master. In his intense vexation of mind, he precipitated his downfall by a blunder which would have disgraced a political novice. The Revolution which had hurled Charles I. of England from his throne, and consigned him to a scaffold, was then in the full flood of its sanguinary triumph. One night while Orleans was supping with the Regent at the Palais Royal, the recent proceedings of the Parliament of Paris coming under discussion, the Cardinal, in an explosion of rage, compared the designs of the leaders of the Fronde to those of Fairfax and Cromwell. The language of Anne of Austria was equally violent. Gaston, dumbfounded by amazement and terror, escaped with all possible haste to the Luxembourg, and, finding De Retz there, repeated to the

Prelate the observations he had just heard. On the following morning the Coadjutor went to the Palace of Justice, reported to the assembled Magistrates, on the authority of Monsieur, what Mazarin had said, in such a manner as to convey the impression that the invidious comparison was intended to apply to the leading members of the High Court, and proposed to petition the King to expel the Minister for ever from his presence and councils, and to restore the captive Princes to liberty. The astute Prelate had not miscalculated the extent of the advantage given to him by Mazarin's imprudent speech. The Parliament, eminently loyal as a body, and holding in deep horror the excesses of the English Republicans, quivered with anger, and voted the address to the King by acclamation. Paris welcomed this decree with extravagant delight. The streets blazed with bonfires; and Orleans, inspirited by the popular demonstrations, publicly declared that he would not again enter the Palais Royal until the Cardinal had departed.

This sudden political tempest burst upon the Court with a violence as resistless as it was unforeseen. Anne of Austria vainly strove to allay it by a message to the Palace of Justice, charging the Coadjutor with deliberate falsehood, and pro-

missing to release the Princes when Madame de Longueville and Turenne made their submission. The tumult swelled fiercer and higher; and the Parliament followed up its first blow by a decree of perpetual banishment against Mazarin and his family. The Cardinal saw that in Paris all was lost. The chances of the game, however, were by no means desperate. The revolt of the Capital did not at that time mean the fall of a dynasty, or even of a Minister. Paris was only the largest and most important of many flourishing cities enjoying municipal freedom, each of them the chief town of a province which still preserved a large measure of self-government. That decisive and malign influence, so often exemplified in our own times, which its restless turbulence exercises on the fate of the kingdom, is the result of an all-embracing and slowly-perfected system of administrative centralization, which was the growth of a later and more despotic period. In order to relieve the Regent from the odium and peril that must attend his presence at the Palais Royal, in defiance of the votes of the Parliament, and at the same time to secure for himself full liberty of action, Mazarin took formal, and, as he professed, final leave of the Court, and quitted the city at night, disguised as an officer of cavalry. But before his

departure, he concerted with his mistress a plan of operations against their common enemies, and received from her a written order to De Bar, which placed the imprisoned Princes unreservedly at his disposal. It was arranged that Anne of Austria, in order to gain time, should feign acquiescence in the exile of her Minister, and concede Condé's release, upon the condition that the insurgents at Stenay laid down their arms. She was next to endeavour, secretly, to break up the confederacy by detaching from it the fickle Lieutenant-General. Should her attempts upon Orleans fail, she pledged herself to the Cardinal, at all risks, to carry off the young King from Paris, and renew the civil war.

In pursuance of this policy, Anne graciously received a deputation of the High Court, publicly spoke of Mazarin's rule as a thing of the past, allowed messengers to be sent to summon Madame de Longueville and Turenne to surrender Stenay, and entreated Orleans to resume his attendance at the Council of State. The Duke, however, rendered prudent by experience and the advice of De Retz, declined to venture his person again at the Palais Royal until Condé had arrived. The Regent employed, without avail, the interposition of the Parliament to bring about an

interview; and, when accepting his excuse of illness as genuine, she offered to call on him at the Luxembourg. Gaston, half beside himself with rage and terror, sent her word that when she entered his palace at one door he would leave it by another. Then, loyal to her compact with her favourite, who quietly watched the course of events from St. Germain, she made preparations for a second nocturnal flight from the capital. But the chiefs of the opposition were on the alert. The suspicious sojourn of Mazarin in the neighbourhood of Paris quickened their vigilance. The Royal Household and the Council swarmed with the Minister's secret foes. Even the most faithful servants of the Queen, chafed by his meddling supervision, and attributing all her inquietudes to his pernicious counsels, rejoiced at his downfall.

Late one night, after she had retired to rest, Madame de Chevreuse received an intimation from Chateaufort, who was still Keeper of the Seals, of Anne of Austria's intention to escape from the Palace at two o'clock on the following morning. The Duchess, prompt and bold as in the days of her adventurous youth, immediately despatched her daughter in a hackney coach to Notre Dame to call up the Coadjutor, and herself

hurried half-dressed to the Luxembourg to incite Monsieur to arrest the Regent's flight. De Retz fully recognised the danger of the position, of which he had been apprehensive for some days. While Beaufort watched the Palace with a body of horsemen, he made his way, in hot haste, to rouse the Lieutenant General to action. On reaching Gaston's bedroom a strange scene met his eyes. The Duchess of Orleans, sitting up in the bed, and Madame de Chevreuse leaning over it, in equally scanty costume, from the other side, were pouring forth appeals, reproaches, and sarcasms on the terror-stricken Duke, who had entrenched himself deep beneath the bed clothes, and was not to be dislodged. It was in vain that De Retz, suppressing by heroic efforts the laughter that convulsed him, exhausted argument and expostulation. In vain the Duchess of Orleans, a stout Lorraine Princess of phlegmatic temperament, added her entreaties with an ardour which was ever afterwards a subject of amazement to her friends. In vain Madame de Chevreuse flung herself in passionate *abandon* on the coverlet, and enforced persuasion by a liberal display of her charms. Gaston, petrified by fear, was insensible to reason or prayer, or the allurements of dishevelled beauty. At every fresh assault he buried

himself still deeper beneath the bed-coverings, and uttered feeble groans. Meanwhile the precious moments were passing away. The coalition was paralysed by the pusillanimity of its chief.

De Retz, however, was not the man to shrink from responsibility in such an emergency. Assured of the support of a powerful confederacy, and of the ultimate approval of Orleans, he resolved to act boldly. His rupture with Mazarin had brought back to him all his old popularity, and, by means of his agents, he had long since organised the *canaille* of the metropolis, congregated in the purlieus of Notre Dame, into a formidable revolutionary force obedient to his will. Returning to the Archiepiscopal Palace, he issued orders for a general rising to prevent the King being carried off to St. Germain. From the belfry of the venerable Cathedral the tocsin of revolt crashed forth upon the midnight air, and soon the iron tongues of a hundred towers and steeples, answering in wild clangour, called Paris to arms. Adherents of the imprisoned Princes, partizans of the Fronde, grave magistrates, substantial citizens, hastened to obey the summons. And, disentombed from their pestilential haunts, disgorged by dens of vice, into which a sunbeam

had never penetrated, loathsome wretches, steeped in crime, whom society had long since placed under her ban and sent to fester in obscure infamy, stole forth to prey on the public calamity, like ghouls flocking to a feast of death. The numerous streams of insurrection converged in a tumultuous sea around the Palais Royal. The shadows of night only partially concealed the motley character of the assembled host. There were nobles there whose ancestors had been renowned in the crusades. There were ecclesiastics of rank, whose cassocks peeped out from beneath the folds of large military cloaks. There were sober burghers, wealthy and peace-loving, who had donned helmet and cuirass in the cause of the Parliament. And, far outnumbering all the others, there were the pariahs of civilization, armed with broken halberds which had shivered at Agincourt on the ranks of English men-at-arms, or with rusty pikes which had flashed at Ivry. The Royal Guards having received orders to offer no resistance, the multitude forced their way into the court-yard of the Palace, and loudly demanded to see the King. Their clamours soon filled every window with trembling, half-naked courtiers, ignorant of the cause of the commotion, whose terrified fancies saw hell let loose beneath them,

as the fitful light of brandished torches threw a dusky glare upon the upturned mass of revolting faces, on which every vice had set its stamp. In this moment of awful peril, Anne of Austria displayed all the courage of her race. Her spirit, the imperial spirit of the Cæsars, did not quail for a moment. Commanding the doors to be flung open, she advanced to meet the insurgents, inquired their wishes, laughed at their apprehensions, and herself conducted the foremost of them, among whom some of the chiefs, and even De Retz himself, were reported to have mingled in disguise, into the bed chamber of the young King. Louis was lying on his little couch, apparently buried in the soft sleep of childhood, undisturbed by the terrors and tumult of the night. The rude rabble, awed into silent reverence, gazed breathlessly for a moment on the beautiful boy, and crept away murmuring benedictions. Little did they imagine what suppressed passion of resentment and wounded pride was at that moment tearing the heart of their young monarch; or that the outrages, of which he seemed unconscious, would live in his mind in burning memories, moulding his character and policy to the last hour of his reign. At dawn the mob dispersed; but the triumph of the Coalition was complete.

Orleans, on awaking later in the morning, and finding all danger over, assumed the entire responsibility of the successful movement. He ordered the burgher militia to replace the Royal Guards at the city gates, and took upon himself all the functions of Government. Anne of Austria, now virtually a prisoner in the Palais Royal, found herself compelled to sign the decree of outlawry against her Minister, and another decree for the immediate liberation of Condé and his brothers. La Rochefoucault, the President Viole, and the Under Secretary of State, La Vrillière, were at once despatched with the order of release to the Governor of Havre.

Mazarin was still at St. Germain when intelligence reached him of the Regent's captivity, and of the sanction wrung from her to the hostile decrees of the Parliament. Without losing a moment he started off with a strong escort to Havre, designing to seize the place and the persons of the Princes. He found, on his arrival, that the news of his reverses had outstripped him. De Bar replied to his summons for admission that he was ready to obey the Regent's order as to the disposal of the prisoners, but that, having sworn by her Majesty's permission to hold the fortress for the Duke of Richelieu, he could not open its gates to

the Cardinal's train. Mazarin then meditated upon carrying away the Princes to some other place of security. He abandoned this project, however, on learning that the neighbouring gentry were rising in arms to oppose it. His only remaining resource was to play the courtier, to endeavour to win by address what he was unable to extort. Leaving his attendants without the walls, he suddenly presented himself before Condé, announced to the Prince that he was free, and sought by argument, flattery, and falsehood to cozen him into an alliance. Condé's prison had been as impervious to intelligence from the outer world as the grave itself. In the first transports of his joy, he welcomed his suppliant enemy cordially, and asked him to dinner. But, in a little time, the couriers sent forward by La Rochefoucault putting the Prince in possession of the real condition of affairs, the civility with which he had listened to the Cardinal's overtures changed to sarcastic politeness. The baffled Minister still lingered in the chateau, clinging to the fading shadow of hope with all the tenacity of despair, and drinking to its very dregs the bitter cup of humiliation. All his fine-spun schemes, all the intricate meshes of his policy, constructed by the craft and toil of years, had been swept away by the breath of

popular passion, as if they had been gossamer woof. The edifice of his power, as it towered defiantly in its strength and splendour, had suddenly crumbled into dust. And his heart was a prey to the torments of abased ambition, and to the gnawing of ingratitude—the most pitiless fury that haunts fallen greatness. He saw his dependents, creatures of his favour and flatterers of his prosperity, transformed by the touch of adversity into pitiless critics, who reproached him with freezing looks, and words of bitter scorn. He had not the grandeur of soul that bears calmly the cruel strokes of fortune. His supple but weak spirit grovelled in the dust under the pressure of such unforeseen calamity. Seeking another interview with Condé, he sounded the depths of meanness in abject entreaties for his victim's protection. The Prince, moved to contempt, not compassion, by such unworthy supplications, coldly bade his humbled foe adieu, and set out with Conti and Longueville for Paris. Mazarin fixed his gaze upon their receding forms until they vanished into space, with the sense of hopeless agony with which the shipwrecked wretch sees the plank, that is his last refuge from destruction, eluding his grasp, and then turned his steps towards exile. But, in the moment of his pro-

found despair, a ray of consolation broke through the cloud of his sorrows. La Vrillière arrived, bearing him letters from Anne of Austria, which assured him of her eternal devotion, of her intention of conforming herself absolutely, in all things, to his counsels, and of her fierce purpose to open the way for his return to power by the destruction of all his enemies. Revived by the new spring of hope which the words of his attached mistress called forth in his breast, the Cardinal pursued his way, in a happier mood, to the Castle of Brühl, near Bonn, which the Elector of Cologne had offered him as a resting place.

Condé was now delivered from the greatest affliction that can befall impatient genius, the compulsory inaction of captivity. His eagle spirit was again free to soar into its native atmosphere of glory. The rapture of recovered liberty, so exquisite in itself, was rendered intoxicating to his fiery temperament by the triumph that awaited him at Paris. All that were illustrious and powerful among his countrymen, the most distinguished and opposite politicians, the most revered magistrates, the most renowned warriors, the most celebrated women, the Fronde, the Parliament, the great nobility, had combined to wrest him from the clutches of the Regent, and now

crowded forth with emulous enthusiasm to swell the pomp of his triumphal return. The Lieutenant-General met his cousin at some distance from the city gates, and, entering his coach, led the magnificent procession. The citizens who, thirteen months before, had lit bonfires to celebrate the Prince's arrest, now celebrated his release with almost delirious joy. Fireworks, public banquets, and universal revelry proclaimed their delight. The power of his enemies lay crushed beneath the movement which had shattered the bars of his dungeon. Mazarin was an impoverished outcast, of whom no man any longer took account. The Regent, deserted and unregarded except by the patriotic Molé, who mourned the victory of mob-violence, even in a righteous cause, nursed her sullen anger in the solitude of the Palais Royal; while the saloons of the Luxembourg and the Hotel de Condé were thronged with exulting guests. In the spring-tide of his popularity, the Prince was urged by some of his ablest adherents to shut up Anne of Austria in a convent, and to transfer her authority to the Duke of Orleans or himself. And this advice was judicious. There are crises in the lives of public men which shape their whole future, and in which audacity is the highest

wisdom. He had ample experience of Anne of Austria's immoveable attachment to Mazarin, and of the duplicity with which she knew how to veil her animosity towards himself. He was aware that the approaching majority of her son would place her in an almost unassailable position. But his entire career illustrated how completely the rapid perception and the iron will that decide the fate of battles, may lose their keenness and vigour in political conflict. Dazzled by the reflection of his own importance in the public rejoicings, and halting, as usual, between his respect for the throne and the promptings of personal ambition, he dallied in serene indecision, until the opportunity of making himself supreme in the State had passed away for ever.

Mazarin, from his retreat at Bruhl, ruled the councils of the Regent with undiminished sway, and strenuously urged her to bend all her efforts to detach Condé from the Fronde. The keen-sighted Italian discerned that this might be effected with time and patience. At first, indeed, the language of the Confederates breathed enthusiasm or gratitude. The Prince tacitly acquiesced in the conditions which had been accepted in his name; the bearing of the Fronde evinced generous confidence. But the seeds of disruption that lay

in the very heart of the Coalition, soon burst forth into a plentiful crop of discord. The Prince began to think that the price he was called upon to pay for naked liberty, shorn of the great dignities and employments which the Crown alone could give him back, was unreasonably high. Bred up in deep veneration for the throne, which he might, by a not improbable course of events, be called to fill, a despot by nature and by military habit, he regarded power springing from popular tumults with feelings of disgust, from the scope of which the great Episcopal demagogue could not altogether escape. Between De Retz and La Rochefoucault there smouldered the bitter hatred of rival wits, between Madame de Longueville and Mademoiselle de Chevreuse the not less bitter hatred of rival beauties. With such sentiments alive in the minds of the leading personages on either side, permanent union was impossible; even the surface of their daily intercourse could not long remain unruffled. Cordiality gradually cooled into formal courtesy, and courtesy was chilled by altercation and distrust. From the very nature of the circumstances, Condé's popularity, which had so suddenly blazed forth on his enemies like a consuming flame, waned with equal rapidity. The assembly of nobles, which had met to demand

his freedom, continued its sittings after his return, and, moved by the jealousy of the political powers accorded or confirmed to the Parliament of Paris by the Decree of the 24th of October, petitioned the Regent to convoke the States-General. The Parliament, conscious that the meeting of national representatives would throw itself into "dim eclipse," and might perhaps annihilate its new political functions, resisted the demand with all its might. Both parties, urging their recent services, confidently appealed to the Prince for support. Condé endeavoured to evade the difficulty by standing neutral between his conflicting obligations, and referring the rival claims to the Duke of Orleans for decision. He only succeeded in incurring the reproach of ingratitude from both sides. It was not without reason that he exclaimed one day, when overwhelmed with applications which it was not in his power to satisfy, but the failure of each of which carried with it a sense of injury, that the Duke of Beaufort had been happy in owing his liberty to his own servants.

When the novelty of his position as a popular idol had worn off, and over-wrought feeling had collapsed into reciprocal disappointment, Condé began to listen complacently to the overtures of the Regent. He consented to receive back from her

his former honours and offices. As a proof of his good will, he successfully opposed in her interests the convoking of the States-General; a measure, ardently desired by De Retz, as being likely to lead to a prolongation of the Regency, with Orleans as Regent, and himself as Prime Minister. Anne of Austria suddenly throwing off the appearance of sullen apathy in which she had shrouded the workings of her mind since the triumph of the Coalition, dismissed Chateaufort, the Minister of the Fronde, transferred the seals to Molé, recalled Chavigny, who possessed Condé's entire confidence, to the Council of State, and publicly defied the Duke of Orleans when he protested against her independent exercise of authority. The leading Frondists held a council at the Luxembourg, which Condé attended, to determine how they should meet this vigorous attack, with the secret of which they were as yet unacquainted. The Coadjutor proposed that Orleans, with Condé's assistance, should depose the Regent, and assume the reins of Government, Beaufort and he undertaking to excite a popular insurrection. Orleans, before venturing an opinion, looked nervously at the Prince, who sarcastically remarked that he was but a coward in back-alley and slop-pail warfare, but would cheerfully take

horse in the provinces at the orders of Monsieur. Beaufort rudely rebuked his old confederate, whose word had hitherto been law to him, for assuming his co-operation. The Lieutenant-General, scared by the answer of his cousin, hastily broke up the conference. In the tone and language of the Prince, and still more in the unfriendly self-assertion of Beaufort, the practised intelligence of the Coadjutor read the dissolution of the league. With his usual decision, he announced to Orleans that the political aims, which the members of the Coalition had bound themselves to accomplish, having been achieved, he no longer felt justified in neglecting the care of his diocese; and he retreated again to the seclusion of Notre Dame.

Anne of Austria now intimated to Condé that he might name his own terms, if he would repudiate his engagements with the Fronde. With a facility, as shameful as it was blind, Condé accepted the proposal. The Under Secretaries of State were instructed to draw up a treaty of alliance, which handed over half the kingdom to the Prince and his immediate following; and the Prince, on his side, undertook to give a public pledge of his change of policy, by the rupture of his brother's engagement with Mademoiselle de

Chevreuse. There was little difficulty in finding a specious pretext for this breach of faith. Mademoiselle de Chevreuse was in the bloom of youth. Her manners possessed an exquisite charm, which rendered the soft spell of her voluptuous beauty irresistible. But she was depraved even beyond the depravity of that dissolute period. Her amour with the Coadjutor was a public scandal. Conti, though passionately attached to her, consented, on being furnished with plain proofs of her misconduct, to renounce the alliance. Good feeling, as well as policy, would have clothed the intimation of this purpose in forms and language of respectful courtesy calculated to deprive the quarrel of unnecessary bitterness. The lady's kindred, the Duchess of Orleans, the Princess Palatine, the Princes of Lorraine-Guise, had not only laid the House of Condé under the deepest obligations, but boasted a lineage as lofty as its own. But the Prince caused his will to be signified in a manner so arrogant and insulting, as justly to provoke the mortal enmity of Madame de Chevreuse, and her powerful family connexions. That spirited lady and De Retz meditated revenge. Orleans renounced the friendship of his faithless cousin. But the person most ungenerously injured by the flagrant ingratitude of Condé was

the Princess Palatine. Confiding in his honour, she had given her note of hand for one hundred thousand crowns to Madame de Montbazon, and had pledged herself to obtain for De Retz a Cardinal's hat. Condé repaid the matchless skill and devotion, to which he owed his liberty, by leaving her to bear the burden of the obligations contracted for his benefit. She tried to obtain the coveted seat in the conclave for the Coadjutor, through the intervention of her sister, the Queen of Poland; but loyal feeling forbade the Queen to act in the matter without the consent of Anne of Austria, her early benefactress. Cut to the heart by the baseness of her hero, and by her inability to perform promises made in the fervour of disinterested enthusiasm, Anne of Gonzaga sought a reconciliation with the Regent, and offered her friendship to Mazarin. The placable Cardinal, appreciating her worth, responded with cordiality to her overtures, and warmly recommended her to the favour of his mistress.

Anne of Austria had now dissolved the victorious host of her enemies; the great confederacy which had jeopardised her authority, and even her liberty, was rent into hostile factions. But her troubles were by no means at an end. Condé imperiously pressed for the fulfilment of their contract; and, on

the first signs of evasion on her part, his language grew more peremptory and menacing. It had never entered into her mind to make concessions so fatal to the Crown. She had merely thrown them out as a decoy to lure the Prince to his destruction; and he, in his arrogant selfishness, had greedily swallowed the glittering bait. But she now found herself isolated, and, without resource, exposed to his fury. In this new warfare, circumstances for a time gave him peculiar advantages. The constant passing of couriers between Bruhl and the Palais Royal irritated and alarmed the Parliament and citizens of Paris. In the High Court Condé thundered against the predominant influence of the proscribed Minister, and won golden opinions by his affected zeal for the public good. At the Palais Royal she used the popular favour to oppress the Regent and despoil the Crown. In the midst of his philippics against Mazarin, he privately offered Anne of Austria to consent to her favourite's return if his demands were granted. But the Cardinal, to his honour, refused to accept restoration on such terms. It would only remain, he said, to carry the Prince to Rheims and crown him King. With great public spirit, he counselled his mistress, rather than barter away the rights of

her son, to purchase the services of his arch-enemy, De Retz, even if it were necessary to instal that aspiring Prelate in his own vacant apartments at the Palais Royal, invested with the dignities of Cardinal and Prime Minister.

The Regent took counsel with the Princess Palatine, and then sending for Madame de Chevreuse and her daughter, appealed to them to assist her in destroying the object of their common hatred. These ladies, smarting from an insult that could only be washed out in blood, fell joyfully into the Regent's views, and answered for De Retz. At midnight the Coadjutor was again closeted with Anne of Austria in her little gray chamber. She offered him an immediate nomination to the conclave, and the chief place in the Ministry, if he would free her from the intolerable yoke of the Prince. At the same time she employed all the arts of feminine persuasion to engage his friendship for Mazarin. The ambitious heart of the Coadjutor leaped with joy. The splendid prize which, for so many years, had inspired his efforts and gilded his dreams was within his grasp. But the evident partiality of the Regent for her fallen favourite, and her evident reluctance to elevate his most formidable rival to his vacant seat, taught the wary prelate caution.

He saw his frank declaration that the alliance she desired was, even in her own interests, impossible, his ability to serve her resting on his antagonism to the Cardinal, fall barren upon her mind. He therefore declined for the present accepting any official position; relying upon Orleans, the Parliament, and the force of public feeling to guard him against the return of Mazarin, and upon time and opportunity to demonstrate to the Regent how indispensable to her were his own services. In order to remove the point which the vacancy in the chief post of the Administration lent to Condé's invective, he proposed that Chateaufort should be recalled to the Council with the title of Prime Minister; and he pledged himself to Anne of Austria to ruin the Prince's popularity, and drive him from the Capital. Transported with joy at gaining such a potent ally, without sacrificing to him her exiled Minister, she replied he might consider himself Cardinal and the second of her friends. The Coadjutor was the vainest of men. Though extremely ugly, his successes among the fair sex were notorious, and no conquest seemed to him impossible. Anne of Austria was a finished coquette; and she now used her blandishments with such effect, that the intoxicated prelate seems to have

conceived the hope of supplanting Mazarin in her heart as well as in her councils. They separated, after a conference of some hours, in perfect accord, each well pleased at the result of the interview.

The new political combination remained for some time a profound secret. The Regent continued to delude the Prince with professions of regard, and of eager anxiety to satisfy his pretensions. But the Fronde assailed him vigorously in the Chambers and in the press, and exposed the hollowness of his patriotic declarations, by baring to public view the whole course of his private negotiations with the Regent. Condé, however, held his ground firmly. Beaufort, still the idol of Paris, was now his zealous adherent; Orleans, overawed by his fiery cousin, remained neutral; Molé and the wiser magistrates deprecated further dissensions in the Royal Family, and the progress of the Coadjutor halted far behind the fierce rush of the Regent's passions. She was in despair. Desperate councils, inspired by baffled vengeance, were deliberately weighed at the Palais Royal. Vitry had been created Duke and Marshal of France by Louis XIII., for assassinating the obnoxious Concini. The precedent was not forgotten. The Prince had, of late, abstained from visiting

the Court, but Marshal Hocquincourt undertook to storm his hotel in the night, and slay him if he attempted resistance. To her eternal dishonour, Anne of Austria warmly approved and encouraged this murderous project. No one could estimate better than she what likelihood there was that the warrior Prince, in his own palace, and surrounded by his retainers, would yield without a blow to the violence of midnight assassins. But De Retz, though unscrupulous and without fear, and steeped to the lips in vice, shrank from the infamy of such an enormous crime. He offered to have Condé arrested at the Luxembourg Palace, in the presence of Monsieur; and although Anne of Austria jealous and distrustful of the Lieutenant General, rejected this proposal, his remonstrances forced her, unwillingly, to abandon the scheme of assassination.

Information that designs were harboured at Court against his liberty reached the Prince, and so completely had he been fooled by the Regent's artifices, and his own egregious presumption, that his astonishment exceeded his anger. Never had he deemed himself more firmly planted in Anne of Austria's favour, never had he counted with greater certainty upon the realization of his ambitious hopes. He barricaded and garrisoned

his hotel, and, shortly afterwards, fresh rumours of the hostile intentions of his enemies catching some colour of truth from the suspicious movements of a body of the Royal Guards, he quitted Paris at break of day for his country house at St. Maur. As he lingered outside one of the city gates, with an armed party of his friends, in expectation of being joined by his brother Conti, the sharp ring of hoofs upon the stony causeway struck his ear. Thinking himself pursued, he set spurs to his horse, and never drew rein till he had reached Meudon. Laughter-loving Paris soon learned with delight how a few donkeys, driven by peasant women to early market, had scared into headlong flight the boldest warrior of the age.

Condé was joined at St. Maur by all his family, and by a great majority of the nobility then in the Capital. Emboldened by this powerful demonstration, he sent a message to the Parliament, declaring his liberty to be menaced, and requiring the dismissal of the three Under Secretaries of State, Le Tellier, Servien, and Lyonne, as being the creatures and accomplices of the still omnipotent Mazarin. Anne of Austria, divided between vexation and alarm at the unexpected popularity of her enemy, sent down to the Palace of Justice a solemn denial of his accusa-

tions. The Coadjutor thundered against the presumption of a Prince of the Blood in claiming to dictate the choice of the King's ministers. But the High Court, anxious to soothe the irritation of the Prince, issued a fresh decree against all who should hold communication with a proclaimed enemy of the realm. The Under Secretaries cowering before the storm, and deeming the cause of their patron lost, threw up their seals and retired from Court; and then Orleans, distracted by contending terrors, paid a friendly visit to his cousin at St. Maur, and persuaded him to return to Paris.

Nevertheless, the breach between Anne of Austria and Condé grew wider every day. There is little doubt that at this time he was heartily sick of faction, and honestly desirous of a reconciliation with the Regent upon terms that would afford a sufficient guarantee for the permanent exclusion of Mazarin from France. But Anne was staunch to her favourite; and the Prince, yielding to the evil counsels of his sister and her following, and to the delusive suggestions of his own inflated egotism, began to prepare for civil war. He sent his wife and son to Montrond, placed officers whom he could trust in charge of the fortresses of his governments, and dispatched

the Marquis of Sillery to Brussels to negotiate a treaty with the Archduke. These criminal steps gave the Regent an advantage which she was not slow to use. She sent a message to the High Court, formally charging the Prince with high treason. The Parliament appointed a day for the consideration of the indictment. De Retz prepared to sustain it with all his genius and all his audacity; and the vacillating Orleans promised his co-operation. On the other hand, Condé drew up a counter-declaration, asserting his innocence, and demanded Monsieur's signature to the document. Gaston, afraid to refuse, yet ashamed to comply, endeavoured to escape the difficulty by flight, and set out for the country in the early morning. But the Prince stopped his cousin's coach before it got clear of the city, and presented the paper which contained his answer to the Regent's charges. Orleans, awed into instant submission by the glance and voice of his imperious kinsman, subscribed his name without a murmur, and sought refuge in a quiet retreat until the tempest blew over.

The day appointed for the hearing of the cause was one of the most agitated in the feverish annals of the Fronde. Perhaps the classic ground by the shore of the hoarse Ægean, where

the fierce democracy of Athens exulted in its stormy life, or the equally memorable spot beneath the shadow of the Roman Forum, whose august temples were so often polluted by the strife of the faction-torn *comitia*, never witnessed a more tumultuous scene than that which on this day desecrated the Palace of Justice. The Regent and De Retz were determined to crush Condé at all hazards; he was equally prepared, if necessary, to resort to the last extremity of force. Paris was divided into hostile camps. The outer halls, the closets, and the corridors of the Palace of Justice were filled with armed men and munitions of war. The members of the High Court passed to their chamber through steel-clad ranks, burning with the rage of civil hatred; and their deliberations were disturbed by the stern murmurs and the clashing of arms that resounded from without. A chill of agonised suspense shot through the assembly, freezing the boldest hearts. Brave men were seen to tremble and turn pale, and drops of intense anguish stood upon many a stern brow, and rolled down many a furrowed cheek. Condé opened the debate with fury, denouncing the Coadjutor as the author of the calumnies by which he was assailed. De Retz replied with equal vehemence, taunting the Prince with perfidy and

ingratitude. The animosity of their followers was kindled into frenzy; the Prince laid his hand on his sword, and it seemed for a moment as if nothing could avert one of the bloodiest tragedies in the history of France. But the First President Molé, whose sublime courage enabled him alone to preserve composure throughout this terrible scene, threw himself between the hostile parties. He implored Condé by the blood of St. Louis not to defile with human sacrifices to the demon of civil discord, the temple which the good King had reared to peace and justice. He adjured the Coadjutor by his sacred office to spare the flock which Heaven had committed to his charge. These appeals, enforced by the venerable character of the great Magistrate, and by the reproaches of half-stifled reason, recalled the leaders to their senses. Condé, whose party was the stronger, immediately despatched La Rochefoucault to dismiss his armed train; and De Retz proceeded in person on a similar errand. But as the messengers of mercy were returning, having accomplished their mission, and the rival hosts were quietly dispersing, La Rochefoucault, with a disregard of good faith and prudence which only the madness of long cherished private and party animosity could inspire, caught the Prelate in the

folds of a door, and holding his body as in a vice, with the head and shoulders within and the lower extremities on the outside, called to his friends to kill the Archbishop. Luckily for De Retz, one of Condé's favourite officers interfered to rescue him from his critical position. The Parliament abruptly broke up its sitting without coming to a decision on the Regent's message.

On the following day Paris awoke, as a man awakes from a drunken debauch. Horror, shame, and remorse urged all whom faction had not bereft of the feelings of humanity, to seek an accommodation. Molé was indefatigable in the work of conciliation. The Regent, who wished for nothing so much as that the Prince and the Coadjutor should cut each other's throats, found it expedient to dissemble her feelings. In a few days the King would attain his majority, and hold a Bed of Justice to announce his assumption of sovereign power. It was agreed that on this solemn occasion, the Prince should be formally declared guiltless of high treason, pledging himself in return to renounce faction. But, even in the short period which had to elapse, new causes of irritation sprang up, which led to his absenting himself from the ceremony. Louis held his Bed of Justice with all the pomp and circumstance befitting the

august occasion of the majority of a King of France. But the elaborate magnificence of ceremonial, and the splendour of martial array only rendered the absence of his greatest subject more conspicuous. Anne of Austria, goaded beyond all endurance by this public slight, and by the terms in which it was excused, publicly declared that she or the Prince must perish. Still, however, the friends of peace, and especially the Duke of Orleans, were unceasing in their efforts to bring about an understanding. Mazarin counselled his mistress to grudge no reasonable concession which might serve to keep the Prince from revolt. But Anne of Austria hated Condé with an implacable hatred, a blending of all the vindictive emotions of an outraged sovereign and an insulted woman; and she saw in him an insuperable obstacle to the return of her Minister, which her courage impelled her to break to pieces. On the other hand Condé, taught by experience to distrust the Regent, urged on by false pride and the violent counsels of his sister's faction, and entangled in engagements with Spain, had unwillingly drifted towards civil war, till he found it well-nigh impossible to retrace his course. Retiring slowly through the province of Berri to the Castle of Montrond, he held council there with Conti,

Madame de Longueville, Nemours, La Rochefoucault, the President Viole, and the faithful Lenet, whose opinions always leant to wisdom and moderation. His mind long remained a prey to remorseful doubts before it could resolve on the fatal plunge into civil war; and when he yielded at last to the importunities of his brother and sister, it was with a mournful prophecy which time fulfilled, that they would desert him at his need. The die was cast, both sides appealed to the sword.

In reviewing the career of Condé since the peace of Munster, when he cast himself into the angry whirlpool of the Fronde, to be swept along finally into the abyss of rebellion, there are few points indeed on which the judgment can rest with even qualified approval. Ambition is an imperious instinct in the minds of men of great abilities and great energy. But ambition may be that lofty and generous sentiment, which is the natural life of genius, kindling all its glorious faculties into beneficent activity, impelling it on its sublime mission to illumine and to make smooth the dark and difficult paths of human progress. And ambition may be a sordid passion which vivifies genius with a baleful fire only to blast it, perverting it from its God-like destinies into a minister of evil, a

deformity, and a curse. After the battle of Lens, the opportunity of winning such renown as has but rarely fallen to the lot of man, opened itself to Condé. He was the hero of the age, radiant with glory. He was at once the first Prince of the Blood, and the chief of a family which had linked its name with popular interests; at once the idol of the French nobility and the pride of the House of Bourbon. All classes in France regarded him with unbounded admiration. Nature and fortune had combined, in lavish emulation, to endow him with every gift and every advantage calculated to attract confidence from all. The Government, weak and discredited, clung to him for safety; the nobles, turbulent and licentious, were prodigal of their spontaneous homage to the brilliant warrior; the Third Estate, goaded to revolt by misrule, but swayed by patriotic statesmen, equally wise, firm, and loyal, eagerly solicited his protection. Had he possessed greatness of soul commensurate with the grandeur of the opportunity, and bent his mind to the noble task of healing the disorders of the State; of consolidating yet confining within salutary limits the power of the Crown; of bridling faction, yet establishing securely the just rights of the subject; he might, in all human probability, have saved France from

a century and a half of demoralizing despotism, and from the wide waste and ruin of the great Revolution. And while securing for himself, on the legitimate basis of great public services, a commanding position in the kingdom, which neither Court intrigue nor popular caprice would have been able to overturn, he might have built himself an imperishable monument in the welfare of his country, and won from the gratitude of mankind a chaplet of fame far brighter, purer, and more enduring than the blood-stained laurels he had gathered on the field of Rocroi.

But this great work, which patriotism invited him to achieve, awoke no responsive enthusiasm in the Prince's mind, debauched by the favours of fortune. The glory of establishing a constitutional monarchy which should combine, in just measure, authority with freedom, was blazoned before his eyes by the eloquence of Molé and De Retz, without inflaming his soul. In the line of policy he pursued, his views, selfish, and therefore short-sighted, were confined within the narrow bounds of his own vulgar interests. He regarded the difficulties of the Regent, and the miseries of the people, only as materials with which the hand of faction might construct a vast edifice of personal aggrandisement. It might have been

thought that when amidst the tempest of universal odium, which his pride and violence provoked, he was hurried a captive to Vincennes, the solitude of his prison would have induced reflection, and that reflection and adversity would have revived in his breast seeds of wisdom that had withered in the blaze of cloudless prosperity. But it required far sterner trials to temper that haughty spirit, to school that turbulent heart. He left his prison to follow again a course of unworthy ambition, along which his progress could only be tracked by national calamities. The reckless audacity with which he openly pursued aims purely selfish, is a remarkable proof of the low standard of public morality in France at that period. There have lived, indeed, in France, both before and after his time, Princes of the Royal Blood whose influence overshadowed the throne. In the preceding century the dishonoured royalty of the despicable Henry III. had shrunk into insignificance in the presence of the Great League which was animated by the heroic soul of Henry of Guise. The succeeding century saw the career and fall of Phillippe Egalité. But Guise was strong, not in the strength of faction, but of the national sympathies. His confederacy was the incarnation of the spirit which stirred to

its lowest depths the heart of Catholic France, the uprising of Catholicism against the Reformation. History has consigned Egalité to eternal infamy by exhibiting him as an odious type of profligate ambition. But such, during the period of his popularity, was not the judgment of the majority of his countrymen. To the few who knew him well, indeed, he was a jaded voluptuary, who, having exhausted every other species of flagitious excitement, was driven by the cravings of a morbid appetite to seek new pleasures in revolution and regicide. But to the mass of the population he appeared, for a time, an illustrious and disinterested champion of liberty, a man of royal rank and royal nature, who, discarding in the sacred cause of humanity the prejudices of birth and the ties of blood, had voluntarily descended to the condition of a private citizen, in order better to co-operate in a movement that crushed colossal injustice, and emancipated millions from hereditary degradation. The ambition of Condé was neither lofty, like that of Guise, nor crafty like that of Egalité. It was not the sublime sentiment which draws its inspiration from a grand idea and is sanctified by a noble purpose. Neither did it seek, with care, to hide its deformity under the borrowed garb of

public virtue. It was of the earth earthy, and its native meanness was only rendered more repulsive by a thin and carelessly worn disguise. For ignoble aims, shamelessly pursued, Condé soiled his glory in the mire of faction; abased his genius, impelled by its natural instincts to soar like the eagle, in slimy paths of intrigue; cast to the winds the obligations of public principle and of private honour; and finally, in the guilty madness of credulous vanity and distempered pride, committed the last political crime in delivering up his country to civil war, and the sword of a foreign enemy.

#### CHAPTER IV.

THE success of Condé was equal to the justice of his cause. At first his criminal enterprise was gilded by some transient gleams of success. Leaving his family in Berri, to keep that province faithful to his interests, he proceeded with La Rochefoucault to his Government of Guienne. The Parliament and citizens of Bordeaux embraced his party with enthusiasm; the provincial magnates, who had formerly looked with coldness on the heroic efforts of his wife, mustered their vassals, and sent them to swell his ranks. The Count of Marsin, Commander of the Army of Catalonia, abandoning a province which had been occupied by the French since the time of Cardinal Richelieu, brought part of his troops to aid the insurrection. Lenet, despatched as the Prince's Ambassador to the Court of Madrid, was flattered with promises of immediate and powerful suc-

cours. In the North, the Count of Tavannes succeeded in detaching Condé's regiments from the Army of Flanders, and erected the standard of revolt upon the walls of Stenay.

But, even in the beginning, the defections from his party fatally diminished its strength and reputation. In the eyes of all Frenchmen, of those even who had grown grey in conspiring, the majority of the Sovereign lent a far graver and more sinister complexion to an act of rebellion. His brother-in-law, Longueville, whose good-natured tolerance was at length wearied out by the scandalous profligacy of his wife, and the domineering arrogance of his brother-in-law, declined to incur further risks on account of schemes in which he was not personally interested, and kept Normandy in its allegiance to the Crown. The two distinguished brothers, Bouillon and Turenne, who had been his ablest and staunchest supporters during the war of Bordeaux, fell from him. Bouillon could bring four thousand retainers into the field, and the military talents of Turenne were worth an army. Mazarin knew the value of these redoubtable chiefs; and by persuading Anne of Austria to satisfy the long-debated claims of the Duke, won them over to his party, and purchased, at a cheap price, for the

young King as splendid and loyal services as any monarchy could ever boast of. (Condé's alliance with the Spaniards, which soon became public, without adding in any great degree to his material strength, weakened his cause morally in an irreparable degree. The Parliament of Paris no longer hesitated to register the King's letter, declaring him and his partizans traitors.) The Parliament of Bordeaux was alienated from his interests. The Duke of Orleans broke off all relations with the proclaimed enemies of the realm.

The Regent acted with her usual courage. Taking with her the young King she joined the veteran army of the Count of Harcourt, a General of proved ability, and advanced into Berri. The people of the province received their young Monarch with joyful demonstrations; the towns threw open the gates to the royal troops, Conti, Madame de Longueville, and the Princess of Condé flying for refuge to Bordeaux. Harcourt then marched to attack Condé in Guienne. All the Prince's genius and activity was insufficient to counter-balance the inferior quality of his raw levies, or to avert from them several slight but galling defeats. Tarnished prestige, and the harsh measures, and harsher manners of their

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leader, provoked disaffection among the insurgents; and public disaster was aggravated by the scandalous disorders which broke out in Condé's family, converting Bordeaux into a chaos of tumult and murder. In her journey from Berri Madame de Longueville had engaged in a lison with the Duke of Nemours, which aroused the jealous anger of La Rochefoucault. Condé prevented further mischief by despatching Nemours to take the command at Stenay. But shortly afterwards Conti, whose weak nature, ever in extremes, passed at a bound from degrading submission to frantic violence, quarrelling with his sister, openly reviled her in language that outraged common decency. The Duchess, in order to revenge herself, formed a party among the dregs of the rabble, who were called Ormistes, from their nightly gatherings beneath some large elm-trees, and urged them on to brutal excesses. Bloodshed and rapine stalked abroad through the city. Condé, already fully occupied by his military operations, strove in vain to calm these dissensions. His wife, whom the Bordelais revered and loved, brought all her influence to the support of the magistrates. Her courage and wisdom might have restored order; but, unfortunately, the delicate condition of her health compelled her to

retire from the conflict, and abandon her old asylum to the unbridled licentiousness of a ferocious mob. With his arms clouded by reverses, and his party torn by discord, Condé saw himself on the brink of ruin, from which he was only snatched by another blunder on the part of Cardinal Mazarin.

The links that bound Anne of Austria to her favourite, forged as they were of intellectual conviction as well as of affection, were of an indissoluble nature, which neither peril, nor interest, nor time, nor absence, had any power over. As with all women of resolute and wilful character, opposition and opprobrium only drove the Regent to cling more tenaciously to what she cherished. Never had the Cardinal more absolutely guided the councils or directed the movements of her Government than during his retirement at Bruhl. But he did not bear adversity well. His mind was tortured by gnawing anxiety, by jealous fears and suspicions. His letters were filled with puling lamentations and peevish reproaches, interspersed with appeals, couched in the language of high-flown sentiment, to his only too-devoted mistress, to abridge the period of his banishment. To the minds of both, her's always sanguine and fearless, his cheated out

of its habitual caution by the illusions which are born of the weary yearnings of exile, the time seemed now ripe for his return to France. The royal authority was obeyed without question over nearly the whole kingdom. The only antagonist whom they feared, banned as a public enemy, and losing ground daily in the corner of France to which he was driven, appeared to be reduced to the alternative of submission or flight. Collecting a body of troops in the Bishopric of Liege, Mazarin crossed the French frontier, joined the King and Queen-mother at Poitiers, and resumed the direction of affairs. But the explosion of public resentment which followed this rash step taught him to regret his precipitation. The Parliament of Paris, incensed at his contempt for its decrees, set a price on his head. The Parisians shouted the old war cries of faction with unabated hatred and zeal. De Retz, to whose ambitious hopes the Cardinal's return to office was a death-blow, withdrew his support and that of his party from the Government. And the Duke of Orleans, irritated into open revolt, formed an alliance with his cousin, whose factious proceedings now wore a semblance of public spirit, and assembled in the neighbourhood of Paris a well-trained army, of which he entrusted the command to the Duke of

Beaufort. Beaufort was soon joined by his brother-in-law, the Duke of Nemours, at the head of Condé's veteran regiments from Stenay and a body of Spaniards; and the combined forces advanced towards the Loire, into the region where the rich appanages of Monsieur lay.

Had either of the Generals possessed military talent the position of the Court would have been perilous in the extreme. But not only were they both totally incompetent, but their councils were distracted by diverging purposes and private animosity. Nemours wished to march to the relief of Montrond, to which the Royalists had laid siege; Beaufort had orders to protect the territories of the Duke of Orleans. Cardinal Mazarin had placed Turenne at the head of the King's army around Poitiers, though only in joint command with Marshal Hocquincourt, and his genius so well supplied the disparity of strength that the excellent quality and superior numbers of the rebel forces barely saved them from destruction. As it was, the insurgents were reduced to inaction, while Angers, Tours, and Blois fell before their eyes; and the Royal Commanders advanced against Orleans, the chief and only remaining town of Monsieur. The danger in which he saw himself of being stripped of all his possessions,

completely paralysed the energies of that feeble Prince. Instead of showing himself at the head of his disheartened troops, and confirming, by his presence, the wavering fidelity of the citizens of Orleans, he betook himself to bed in a fit of irresolution. But his daughter by his first marriage, Mdle. de Montpensier, boldly came forward to defend her father's interests.

This celebrated lady was now about twenty-five years old. Flattery never endowed her with beauty. Her detractors averred that the *brusquerie* of her manners was strongly dashed with impertinence. Her inordinate vanity was constantly shooting forth in strange eccentricities of speech and action; and was prone to avenge itself on superior merit in her own sex by shafts of ridicule, occasionally tipped with the poison of feminine malignancy. But she possessed a daring soul, generous impulses, a strong will, and considerable talent. Having inherited through her mother the vast possessions of the Ducal House of Montpensier, she was the richest heiress of the age, and her hand was an object of ambition even to Kings. Indeed, the chief cause of her undissembled ill-humour with the Regent and Cardinal Mazarin was, that they had frustrated more than one matrimonial alliance on which she had set her

heart, deeming it contrary to the interests of the State that her vast estates should pass under the control of a foreign Prince. Charles II. of England, while in exile at the French Court, figured among her suitors. But it is difficult indeed to discover any promise of the "Merry Monarch," whose graceful bow, ready wit, and flowing courtesy were the crowning charm of one of the most brilliant courts of modern Europe, in the gloomy and bashful youth, to whom the language of gallantry, or even of compliment, seemed unknown. Perhaps the part of the impassioned lover was not easy with the "grande Mademoiselle." At all events she seems to have looked on him as a sort of delicate monster, recording with special interest his voracious onslaught upon a joint of mutton. The needy and harsh-featured wanderer was not to the taste of the high-spirited Princess. She appears at this time to have cherished the hope which, notwithstanding a great disparity of age, Anne of Austria and the Cardinal encouraged, of ascending the throne of France as the bride of Louis XIV. Her secret partialities had long been with Condé. She lets it be seen in her curious, though insufferably egotistical memoirs, that she would willingly have married him in the event of his wife's death; and

she ever displays towards that noble woman a peculiar vindictiveness. After withering until the late autumn of her life in thorny virginity, Mdle. de Montpensier gave her hand in secret nuptials to the Count of Lauzun, so famous for his escapades at the Court of the Great King, and the gallant services he rendered to Mary of Modena and her ill-starred husband; and she was compelled to atone for her mature indiscretion by granting the reversion of her enormous property to the French Crown.

Mademoiselle arrived at the camp of Beaufort and Nemours to find the army disorganised by the dissensions of its leaders. These noblemen were so inflamed against each other that they came to blows in her presence, and though she succeeded in composing the quarrel for the time, their smouldering resentments afterwards leaped up into a fratricidal duel, in which Nemours was killed. Escorted by her ladies, she boldly presented herself at one of the gates of Orleans and demanded admittance, just as an envoy from the King had arrived at the opposite entrance to summon the town. The magistrates were divided in opinion, and refused to receive either party. Mademoiselle stormed and cajoled to no purpose, the officer in charge of the gate replying to her objurgations

only with profound bows. But while she was allowing her anger to evaporate in a solitary stroll along the bank of the river, some of the boatmen, crowding round her, pointed out a barricaded sally-port, looking on the quay, in which a breach might easily be effected. At her instigation they made an opening, through which they dragged and pushed her and two of her ladies into the town. The populace, yelling with enthusiasm, carried her in triumph, all be-draggled and partially disarrayed, but delighted with the adventure, to the Hotel de Ville, where she terrified the magistrates into submission. By this achievement, which, half heroic, half ludicrous, well reflected the character of the heroine, Mademoiselle de Montpensier preserved the city of Orleans for her father.

While Condé was painfully battling with the difficulties which beset him in Guienne, news reached him of the dissensions of Beaufort and Nemours, and the critical situation of their army. He felt that should this veteran force, which was the main-stay of the insurgent cause, melt away or be destroyed, the loss would be irreparable; and his intelligence left him no room for doubt with regard to the critical position to which it was reduced by the divisions and the incompetency of

its chiefs. His presence alone could save it from dissolution. It was a desperate crisis; but great actions are born of great difficulties, and the Prince now conceived one of the boldest enterprises that ever occurred to a leader. This was to traverse one hundred and twenty leagues of hostile territory, swarming with vigilant foes, guarded along all its routes by strong towns and fortresses, intersected by broad and rapid rivers, the bridges and fords of which were in the hands of enemies, and, penetrating Turenne's lines, to put himself at the head of the Army of the Loire. Recognition would involve certain captivity or death, and his person was so well known, especially at the Court, which lay in his track, that the least suspicion of his journey must infallibly lead to discovery. The most profound secrecy, the greatest celerity, and rare good fortune were necessary for success. The conduct of the expedition was confided to the skilful audacity and the infinite resource of Gourville.

The Prince committed the command in Guienne to his brother Conti, leaving him the Count of Marsin and the able Lenet as assistants, and set out on the evening of Palm Sunday, 1652, in the habit of a courier. He was accompanied by La Rochefoucault, by the young Prince of Marsillac,

a boy of fifteen, by Gourville, and by three other gentlemen, all wearing disguises. They travelled day and night, avoiding as much as possible the high roads, never halting longer than two hours at a time for rest and food, and never changing horses unless when compelled by absolute necessity. The hair-breadth escapes, and the laughable incidents which chequered the journey, continued long afterwards on winter evenings to furnish food for wonder and mirth at provincial firesides. By a bold stratagem Gourville obtained possession of one of the boats at a ferry on the Dordogne, and the party crossed over without incurring the risk of inconvenient questions or scrutiny. Coming to a halt at a little out-of-the-way hostelry, the Prince was glad to escape with no other injury than bitter taunts and curses from the quick-tempered inn-keeper, who was enraged by the awkward way in which the pretended courier obeyed an order to bridle a horse. In another little village Condé was jeered by a justly incensed landlady, for letting an omelet, which he had rashly volunteered to cook, fall into the fire. She let him off with a shower of derisive compliments, in consideration of the sound rating administered to him by Gourville. One day a countryman recognised Condé, and called out his name, but the

cool impudence of the imperturbable Gourville cheated the bewildered rustic into disbelief of his own senses. Another day the party was hospitably entertained by a gentleman who, unconscious of the quality of his guests, retailed for their amusement all the current scandal and popular jests on the subject of Madame de Longueville's notorious gallantries. They crossed the Loire in a boat, which landed them, by some misadventure, at the very gates of La Charité, a strong fortress commanded by Bussy Rabutin, whom some real or fancied injuries had changed from a staunch adherent to a bitter foe of the Prince. Condé and Gourville riding forward, without hesitation, accosted the officer on guard, passed themselves off as comrades in arms, who having outstayed their leave were hurrying to rejoin their regiments, and, leaving affectionate messages for their friend Rabutin, pursued their journey unimpeded, under the walls of the town. A still greater danger befell the adventurers as they approached the Royal Camp. Being under the necessity of venturing upon the high road, one of their number, the Count of Guitaut, was recognised by a courier from the Court. By this time men and horses were completely exhausted, the Prince's iron frame alone being able to endure

the constant watching and fatigue. Young Marsillac had fainted several times, and during the later stages of the expedition had been unable to sit on horseback without assistance. The only chance of safety lay in separating into smaller bodies. Condé, La Rochefoucault, and Marsillac kept together. Turning their horses loose, they crept along stealthily, within a few paces of each other, seeking cover in ditches and patches of vegetation, until they reached the chateau of the Duchess of Chatillon, the sight of which, recalling the recent death of his adoring mother within its walls, must have awakened painful regrets in the Prince's mind. They passed the night in the chateau, surrounded by detachments of the enemy, and the following day, eluding the pursuit of the numerous parties sent out to capture them, presented themselves in safety at the headquarters of Beaufort and Nemours.

Mazarin, equally unwilling to put a slight upon the long and distinguished services of Hocquincourt, and to lose the military talents of Turenne, had unwisely divided the Royal Army into two bodies, and given to each of the Marshals an independent command. Turenne's troops were quartered around Gien, where the Court resided. Hocquincourt had pitched his camp a few leagues

in advance, near Bleneau, and, despising the incapacity of his opponents, had taken little care to secure his position. On the night following Condé's arrival Turenne was aroused from sleep by the distant tumult of battle in the direction of Bleneau. Starting up, he rushed into the open air and gained an eminence that commanded an extensive view. The camp of Hocquincourt was wrapped in flames, and the light of the conflagration fell on disorderly masses of troops, flying in hopeless rout before the furious attacks of the insurgents. Turenne gazed for a moment in silent amazement on the disastrous spectacle, and then, turning to his officers, said—"The Prince must have arrived." The great warrior recognised the presence of kindred genius in that scene of discomfiture and terror. But the peril of the situation left the Marshal little time for reflection. No one knew so well as he the ardour, sometimes amounting to rashness, with which Condé followed up an advantage. The King and Queen reposed in complete unconsciousness of danger at Gien, while there only remained his own small army to shield them from captivity. He was equal to the emergency. Pushing forward, with extraordinary boldness, the four or five thousand men under his command into a

position partly covered by woods, which concealed his weakness, he vigorously repelled the advance of the victorious enemy. Condé's eagle glance was for once at fault. A great part of his army, corrupted by lax discipline, had dispersed for plunder; and, fearful of falling into an ambuscade, after one somewhat feeble attack, he halted his men in order to allow time for the stragglers to rejoin their ranks. The hours thus wasted enabled Hocquincourt to rally his beaten division, and bring it up to the support of his colleague. Turenne, no longer fearing to be crushed, confidently awaited the enemy in his strong position, which his antagonist, having discovered his error too late, did not now venture to assail. And thus, on this extraordinary day, the fiery Condé lost, through want of daring, the opportunity which he had purchased by such prodigies of hardihood and endurance, of rendering himself master of France by a single blow; and the cautious Turenne "replaced," to use the words of Anne of Austria, "the crown on the head of her son" by a manœuvre, the success of which could not redeem it in the eyes of such a friendly critic as Napoleon from the fault of excessive rashness.

After this exploit, so brilliant even in its partial failure, Condé taking with him the Dukes of

Beaufort, Nemours, and La Rochefoucault, and leaving the command of the army to the Counts of Tavannes and Vallon, two officers who enjoyed his confidence, set out for Paris, where his interests urgently demanded his presence.

His first few weeks' experience in Guienne had rudely dispelled the vainglorious illusions with which the Prince had entered upon the civil war. His military genius, with the advantages of the most splendid prestige, and the most powerful following of any subject in Europe, and of alliance with Spain, could not avert disgraceful defeat in a struggle for personal ends, which rallied the patriotism and loyalty of France around the throne of his young Sovereign. The selfish impatience which precipitated Cardinal Mazarin's return to France, in defiance of law and of public opinion had, by partially relieving the ill-judged enterprise of Condé from the crushing odium of wanton rebellion, and by raising up for him unexpected allies, rescued him from destruction. But Condé felt that he could only make a successful stand against legitimate authority by a cordial union with the Duke of Orleans, who possessed the confidence of the middle classes, especially in the Capital; and by winning the countenance of the Parliament of Paris, which, though it had placed

a price on Mazarin's head, upheld the King's decree against himself and his partizans. In accomplishing these purposes he had to vanquish the opposition of an enemy as skilful and more determined than Mazarin himself.

De Retz had now succeeded his uncle as Archbishop of Paris. When Mazarin's sudden re-appearance at Court dashed the long-desired and scarcely tasted cup of power from his lips, the Archbishop had betaken himself again to the government of his diocese, the rage and despair of baffled ambition consuming his haughty soul. But his animosity towards his Italian rival, intense as it was, paled before his hatred and distrust of Condé. Though he used all his arts to alienate the Duke of Orleans from the Queen, he was not less eager in dissuading the Duke from an alliance with the Prince. He strove to reconstruct out of the remnant of the Fronde that still adhered to him, and the Parliament and citizens of Paris, a constitutional party, under the nominal leadership of Orleans, which opposing Mazarin and Condé, irresponsible despotism, and selfish faction, would maintain the Royal authority as limited by the Declaration of the 24th of October. But this combination, which, though it may have had its root in

his personal ambition, was worthy of the enlightened genius of De Retz, and was consistent with the general scope of his policy from the beginning, failed, notwithstanding that it attracted the cordial sympathies of Molé and his friends, on account of the lack of public spirit in the country; the weakness of Monsieur, the selfish pride of the nobles, the selfish timidity of the burghers, and the demoralization of the populace. De Retz then withdrew himself almost completely from active participation in politics, only appearing from time to time to assist the Magistrates in preserving order. While Condé was still in Guyenne, feeling the necessity of destroying an influence so prejudicial to his cause in Paris, he had commissioned Gourville to carry off the Archbishop from his palace, and deliver him up to the Spaniards. Gourville laid his plans with his usual audacity and skill, but the enterprise, so congenial to his temper, miscarried at the last moment through an accident, and he had to fly for his life. After this narrow escape, and while the political fortunes of De Retz were seemingly at their lowest ebb, by one of those strange turns of destiny visible throughout his eventful career, the great prize which all his life he had laboured in vain to secure, fell to him unasked for, and when it had probably

passed beyond the range of his hopes. The Regent had requited his services against Condé, during Mazarin's absence at Bruhl, by a nomination for a Cardinal's hat. After her favourite's return, she sent to Rome to cancel the appointment. The Pope, however, at the next creation of Cardinals, elevated De Retz to a seat in the conclave. It was through the spontaneous act of the Pontiff that the baffled demagogue and discarded Minister acquired the dignity he so greatly coveted of Prince of the Church, and the appellation under which he is famous to all time.

Condé's presence in the Capital gave him complete sway, for the time, over the mind of his volatile cousin. The confederate Princes, in order to conciliate the favour of the Parliament, issued a Declaration setting forth, in the language of exalted patriotism, that having taken up arms solely to free the realm from the evil rule of a foreign Minister, they were ready to disband their troops when he, in obedience to the edict of the High Court, retired from France. But Molé and his colleagues, being well-informed of the close relations subsisting between the rebel chiefs and the Spanish Army, then ravaging the northern provinces, and also of the private negotiations with Mazarin which Condé was at that very

moment carrying on through the Duchess of Chatillon, treated this specious manifesto with the contempt it merited, and publicly reproached its authors with their treason and perfidy. The Princes, stung by these just denunciations, resorted to intimidation. Wielding with unskilful hands the dangerous weapons of De Retz, they excited the rabble against the Magistrates, and being unable to curb the demon they had raised, the city fell under the reign of lawless violence.

In this unprosperous state of his affairs, death deprived Condé of his ablest councillor, the celebrated Chavigny. This eminent politician, the favourite pupil of Richelieu, having been long condemned to obscurity by the hatred of Anne of Austria and the jealousy of Mazarin, had lately become the chief adviser of the Prince. At the time of his decease he was busy with a project which redounded little to the credit of his patron. News having arrived in Paris that the Princess of Condé was fast sinking under a mortal illness at Bordeaux, neither esteem for her virtues nor gratitude for her services restrained her husband from an indecent exhibition of joy at the prospect of being released from ties that had always galled him; and he immediately commissioned Chavigny to arrange for his second nuptials with Made-

moiselle de Montpensier. But the Princess, having given birth to a son, and having lingered long between life and death, began slowly to mend, to the intense vexation of her lord, and the intense delight of the faithful Gascons. Little could these generous hearts divine how cruel was the fate which then snatched their heroine from the grave.

Whilst abortive political and matrimonial intrigues distracted Condé's attention from military operations, Tavannes and Vallon, out-generalled and beaten by Turenne, now in supreme command of the Royal Army, found themselves shut up, with diminished forces, in the town of Etampes, and reduced to the last extremity. In compliance with urgent demands for assistance from the rebel Princes, their Spanish allies prevailed on the Duke of Lorraine, by the payment of a large subsidy, to march his army—all that remained to him of the rich territory of which he was Sovereign—into the heart of France. This seasonable diversion extricated the insurgents; uniting with the soldiers of Lorraine they retired on Paris, closely followed by Turenne.

A trial of strategical skill followed, in which the Royal commander, though inferior in strength, baffled all the efforts of the confederates to crush him; and then the needy Duke of Lorraine, moved

by the golden arguments of Mazarin, suddenly retired over the frontier, leaving his allies to shift for themselves.

The rebel army, now reduced to about five thousand men, was exposed by this desertion to be overwhelmed at St. Cloud by the simultaneous attacks of Turenne and Marshal la Ferté, who had marched to Turenne's assistance from the borders of Flanders; and Condé went forth again to lead it through the city to a safer position at Charenton. But the municipal authorities, who were loyal to the King and justly indignant at the frightful disorders which mocked their rule, with the aid of De Retz, prevailed on the unstable Orleans to allow the gates to be shut against his cousin. The Prince, thus caught in a trap, endeavoured in the short night of the 1st July, 1652, to draw off his men under the shadow of the city walls. But he was unable to elude the unsleeping vigilance of Turenne; and when, at break of day, he reached the Faubourg St. Antoine, his rear was so hotly pressed by overwhelming numbers that he was compelled to halt and give battle.

Three streets forming the Faubourg converged upon an open space before the Gate St. Antoine. These he caused to be closed with barricades and such entrenchments as could be hastily thrown

up, and committed their defence to Nemours, Tavannes, and Vallon. La Rochefoucault and a chosen body of gentlemen remained with their leader as a reserve, ready to rush upon the enemy wherever succour was most needed. The rear of the insurgents rested on the city gate, jealously barred and guarded against them, and the gloomy walls of the Bastille. On his side Turenne made his dispositions for the attack with his usual promptitude and ability. But this great General rated too highly the merits of his old commander to throw away any chance of success in conflict with such an antagonist; he, therefore, wished to delay the assault until La Ferté had come up with the heavy artillery. The young King and Mazarin, however, had taken their station on the heights of Charonne, overlooking the battle-field, and impatient to witness the destruction of the illustrious rebel, sent message after message to the illustrious Marshal, urging immediate action. The walls, towers, and steeples of the city were alive with swarming multitudes, whose gaze was rivetted by a terrible fascination on the bloody tragedy that soon began to unfold itself beneath.

The battle was one of the fiercest and most stubborn in the annals of war. The Royal troops, confident in an overwhelming superiority of force,

and eager to distinguish themselves under the eyes of their young Monarch, attacked in three columns with extraordinary impetuosity. The insurgents, feeling that their only hope of safety lay in their valour, disputed every inch of ground with the most determined resolution. Nemours, Tavannes, and Vallon fought on the barricades at the head of their men. La Rochefoucault surpassed even the splendid gallantry which had rendered the ruined defences of Bordeaux impregnable. Condé himself, in his fury and his prowess seemed more than mortal; the living image of the God of War, as depicted more than two thousand years before in immortal verse by the greatest of poets. His terrible countenance, flaming with the fierce joy of conflict, his voice rolling in thunder along the ranks of battle, and the lightning strokes of his sword carried dismay into the enemy in every part of the field. The rapidity of movement by which he multiplied himself at the points of danger appeared superhuman. "Did you see the Prince of Condé on that day?" was afterwards asked of Turenne. "I did not see one Prince of Condé," replied the Marshal; "I saw more than twelve." The carnage was horrible. The combat raged from house to house, from story to story, from early

morning till noon. At mid-day both armies, exhausted by fatigue and the intense heat, were compelled to desist for a brief interval of repose. But, although the fate of the engagement was still undecided, the superior numbers and *matériel* of the King's army had told with fearful effect on the insurgents. Turenne's guns had crushed and levelled their feeble defences, and, sweeping the streets with an iron tempest, had made sad havoc in their ranks. Half the Prince's soldiers, and nearly all their leaders, had fallen. La Rochefoucault's cheeks were pierced by a musket ball. Nemours and Vallon were carried from the field desperately wounded. Condé, though his armour was dented with blows, remained unscathed. In the middle of the fight, being almost suffocated by the heat, he had caused himself to be disarmed and undressed, rolled himself over and over in an adjacent field, and then, refreshed and invigorated by the touch of his mother earth, had returned like a Titan to sustain his fainting ranks. Slowly recoiling before the ever-increasing masses of the Royalists, he took advantage of the pause to disengage his remaining troops from the smoking ruins of the Faubourg; and, drawing them up in a compact body before the city gate, he awaited the

approach of his foes with the calm courage of despair. Turenne, having been reinforced by the fresh army and powerful artillery of La Ferté, prepared to deliver the decisive blow which should end the civil war. But in this moment of dreadful suspense, a young and high-born woman, alighting upon the scene like some goddess in a Homeric battle, robbed the Royalists of a certain triumph and snatched the Prince from inevitable destruction.

On Condé's departure from Paris, the Duke of Beaufort had remained behind, and though unable to defeat the hostile measures of the municipal authorities, remained true to his friend. As the sounds of battle came floating into the city; as the emotions of admiration and pity for over-matched heroism that thrilled the spectators, who crowded every turret and pinnacle, flashed with electric sympathy through the multitudes below; as the ghastly heaps of the wounded piled up against the city gate rose higher and more hideous, the popular ferment burst forth in tumult, and Beaufort, exerting on behalf of his hard pressed associates the rough eloquence which was his only talent, inflamed by stirring harangues the passions of the populace. The popular clamour compelled the municipal authorities to

allow the wounded to be carried within the walls, and the tears and prayers of these brave men, who, unmindful of their own sufferings, implored succour for their gallant comrades, kindled the public agitation into fury. Mademoiselle de Montpensier boldly seized the opportunity to save her cousin. She first wrung from the fears and the compassion of her irresolute father a written order to the Governor of the Bastille to obey her directions. Then proceeding amidst the acclamations of a vast multitude to the Hotel de Ville, partly by coaxing, partly by threats of personal violence, she extorted from old Marshal l'Hopital, Governor of Paris, and the Provost of the Merchants, an order to the officer in command at the Gate St. Antoine to admit the rebel army. Enchanted with her success, she hurried on foot to the scene of battle. Her way lay along the street St. Antoine, which was choked by the mournful procession of the dying and the dead. At every step gaping wounds appalled her sight, cries of agony assailed her ears, the pallid anguish of some familiar face smote her heart. She met La Rochefoucault, blinded and insensible, borne along in the arms of his son and of Gourville. She met Vallon, almost expiring in a litter, who called out to her in feeble tones that all was lost; and

Guitaut, faint with loss of blood, reeling on his horse like a drunken man. Repairing to a house near the ramparts, she sent to the Prince to come and see her. He was standing at a short distance from the gate, calmly watching the slowly advancing columns of Turenne, the gathering thunder cloud of war that was about to burst in ruin on his head. His face was hardly to be recognised under its hideous mask of clotted dust and blood, and the long matted locks that hung about it in wild disorder; his shirt and collar were smeared with gore, and in his hand was a naked sword, of which he had flung away the scabbard. On seeing the Princess he sank upon a seat and burst into tears. "Pardon my grief," he said to her; "I have lost all my friends." She soothed him with words of comfort, ordered the Gate St. Antoine to be thrown open, and the guns of the Bastille to check Turenne's advance. Condé, disdaining to retreat in broad day before Mazarin, held his ground until nightfall, and then retired unmolested within the walls. The astonishment of the Regent and the Minister at the escape of their great enemy was only equalled by their indignation. The Cardinal had hitherto favoured Mademoiselle de Montpensier's aspiring project to become the bride of Louis XIV., thinking it

good policy to attach her immense possessions to the French Crown. But when he learned that she had ordered the cannon of the Bastille to play upon the King's army, he exclaimed, with a fixed resolve which nothing was able ever afterwards to shake, "She has killed her husband."

The presence of his troops within its walls rendered Condé master of Paris. But the majority of the High Court, nothing daunted, freely expressed their disapproval of the weak compliances of Marshal l'Hopital and the Provost of the Merchants, to which he owed his safety. The Prince, soured and rendered reckless by his reverses, retaliated by hounding on his soldiers and the rabble against the Chambers. He was unable to control the fiendish passions he had let loose, and the city was again delivered up to a saturnalia of crime, to pillage, murder, and conflagration. The savage rioters attacked the Palace of Justice with fire and sword, and it was by a miracle that the blazing building did not become the funeral pyre of the slaughtered Magistrates. Hundreds of the citizens were butchered in the face of day. The High Court suspended its sittings. Molé and his leading colleagues fled from a scene in which law and order were trampled in the dust by a licentious

soldiery, and many of the principal inhabitants followed their example. The beleaguering army of Turenne, cutting off the regular supplies of provisions, famine came to glut itself with victims whom violence had spared, and pestilence swept away crowds of spectral wretches already wasted by hunger. The unhappy Parisians, all but the dregs of the population, the vultures of society who feast amidst carnage and desolation, feeling that the rankest despotism could not corrupt into evils more dreadful than those deadly fruits of unbridled license, sighed for the restoration of the Royal authority. Every day the insurgent cause sank lower and lower. It was to little purpose that the Duke of Lorraine, having literally fulfilled his engagement with Mazarin by marching out of France, marched back again, and compelled Turenne to raise the siege of the Capital. Tavannes and Vallon led out the Prince's troops to co-operate with the troops of Lorraine. But although the Royalist General, knowing with whom he had to deal, did not hesitate to place his small army in exposed positions, his incompetent antagonists failed to seize the opportunities he afforded them. Condé, eaten up by anguish and remorse for the downfall of his party, and the miseries caused by his guilty

ambition, and worn by incessant toils, had succumbed to a dangerous fever. He was only able to vent his impotent rage by shouting from his sick bed, "Give bridles to Tavannes and Vallon; they are asses." At the termination of a fruitless campaign the Duke of Lorraine again retreated across the frontier; and, to add to Condé's misfortunes, his impregnable fortress of Montrond, after holding out for a year, was reduced by famine. The astute Mazarin, seeing the Fronde at the last extremity, dealt it its death blow by voluntarily retiring a second time into exile. The more uncompromising members of the Parliament, who had remained in the Capital after the departure of their First President, immediately declared for the King, and drew after them the whole body of substantial citizens. The chiefs of the insurrection, in the blind haste of selfish fear, opened separate negotiations with the Court. Anne of Austria temporised, until terror and distrust had broken up the party. Then, assuming a haughtier tone, she announced that the season of concession was over, that she required unconditional submission. In truth there only remained the desperate alternative of repairing to the Spanish Camp.

It will be obvious, even from this feeble sketch

of the rise and fall of the Fronde, that it contained in itself, from the very beginning, the seeds of its own destruction. There is no record in history of a struggle of equal moment, one involving such mighty interests, such stupendous results, and sustained by the utmost energies of so many men and women endowed with most glorious gifts of nature, in which so little can be found to inspire the fancy, satisfy the judgment, or elevate the heart. It was, as regards the vast majority of those who took part in it, a war of mean passions for mean objects, relieved indeed by many brilliant, many amusing, and by some admirable incidents; episodes dearly purchased by the general degradation of genius, courage, and beauty. What most strikes the mind contemplating the strife of the Fronde, is an absence of moral grandeur. It did not even contain any grand element of terror. It wanted even the dignity of colossal crime. We see a strange drama in which feeble tragedy and broad farce are fantastically interwoven; in which horrors, bordering on the ludicrous, give place, with startling rapidity, to more ghastly mirth; terror with little of sublimity, and humour degenerating into satanic ribaldry. (One thing alone in the shifting chaos of fickle passions and

grotesque incidents, of vice and madness, appears permanent. This is an all-pervading spirit of selfishness; the principle of disorder, which quickened, and, by quickening, gradually destroyed, the elements of social confusion. Grasping Princes and nobles, aided by turbulent demagogues, taking advantage of popular discontent and of a long minority, seek to strip newly dowered royalty for their own aggrandisement; an alien Minister, under the pretext of defending the rights of the Crown, strives with equal avidity to clutch undivided authority, and enormous wealth, shamefully pilfered from an exhausted exchequer and a famishing people.

But in intimate alliance with, and partly concealed by, the play of base and frivolous passions, an issue of the last consequence to France and to Europe was fought out with a singleness of purpose, a strength of conviction, and a steadfast courage worthy of its magnitude. Mathieu Molé strove to win and to preserve inviolate a charter of public rights; and Anne of Austria strove to maintain the absolute prerogative inherited by her son.

When France, depressed by a long series of disasters, surrendered to Charles VII. the right of taxing the Third Estate without its consent, she

enabled her Sovereigns, by pursuing a policy as crafty as it was patient and tenacious, gradually to destroy every authority in the realm, independent of their own. They raised up barriers of privilege between the different orders which, till the close of the 14th century, had been accustomed to meet frequently, on an equal footing, in national assemblies for the discussion and the regulation of public affairs; and having rendered co-operation on the ground of common interests impossible, they in the end reduced each order to absolute subjection. The nobles, exempted from the burthens of the State, and monopolising its honours and dignities, from being an aristocracy stiffened into a caste, and ceasing to share the motives and feelings completely lost their hold upon the mass of the population. Privileged but isolated, they were easily crushed by open attack, or allured to Court, saw their hereditary jurisdiction silently transferred to functionaries of the Crown. The cultivators of the soil, oppressed by imposts, not only arbitrary and capricious in themselves, but rendered insufferably galling by a vicious system of collection, looked with envy and hatred on their rich, untaxed lords, who, without affording them protection, increased their miseries by a harsh exaction of feudal services. Such of

the peasants as were fortunate enough to acquire a competence, took refuge in the nearest town under the shelter of municipal institutions, and, if possible, purchased some privileged office which separated them completely from their former life. But the towns also had been gradually despoiled of their ancient freedom. Louis XI. had made relentless war upon them, and most of his successors looked with a jealous eye upon their remaining powers and franchises. At the time of Cardinal Richelieu's death, the Royal authority had emancipated itself from all constitutional control—at least, in the *pays d'élection*, which formed three parts of the kingdom—except whatever feeble restraint might exist in the privilege of humble remonstrance before registering the King's edicts, which the Minister left to the Parliament of Paris. The liberty of all French subjects, the property of the middle and lower classes, lay completely at the mercy of the Crown. To make security of person and of goods the birthright of every Frenchman—a right of the subject which has always been regarded in free communities as a necessary condition of good government and national prosperity—and to constitute an independent and vigilant guardian of this right by vindicating for the Parliament of

Paris its ancient claims to discuss freely and to reject, if they were illegal or oppressive, the King's edicts, were Molé's objects. Never, perhaps, did a public man labour for more worthy aims with truer patriotism or more heroic courage. He was not, indeed, exempt from the prejudices of his time and office, or from narrow partialities for his order. He desired all that he did to extend and elevate the functions of the High Court beyond all authenticated precedent; and therefore he regarded the States General with as much jealousy and dislike as Anne of Austria herself. But in the circumstances of the time it might well have seemed to him that this professional spirit was the highest public spirit. The nobles, having selfishly betrayed the Third Estate, had for long past evinced only a disposition to profit by the injustice under which it suffered. The beneficed clergy and the ecclesiastical corporations enjoyed the same privileges as the nobles. The somewhat cumbrous machinery of the States General having long been discarded from ordinary use in political life; and having, when tried in extraordinary emergencies, proved impotent to effect reform, chiefly because the privileged being separated from the unprivileged classes, not only by a sharply defined

line of distinction, but by the absence of common interests and common sympathies, the King could venture to treat the national remonstrances with neglect; the only hope of securing juster measure for the Third Estate, without a revolution, might well have appeared to lie in investing the Parliament with a power of control.

Molé, however, committed the error of a generous and courageous mind in attempting to accomplish a political reformation with inadequate means. To set limits to the prerogative of the Crown was a task above the strength of the Parliament of Paris. This was clear to De Retz, a man of far less pure and lofty character than the First President, but possessing an intellect incomparably more powerful, enlarged, and versatile. (Inspired chiefly, no doubt, by personal ambition, but also in a spirit of enlightened statesmanship, De Retz conceived the design of bringing the aspiring genius of Condé, the military turbulence of the depressed nobles, the discontent of the citizens, and the passions of the populace into an irresistible, however ephemeral, movement which might compel concession by the Regent of the demands of the Parliament of Paris, and bear himself on its crest to the direction of the reformed Government.)

The political duel between De Retz and Mazarin, one of the most interesting in history, was not merely a strife of rival ambitions. It was also a conflict of rival principles, and it involved the issue whether an absolute or a limited Monarchy was to be established in France. The champions were not unequally matched. Each was weighted with scandalous vices that sunk him in public esteem. The Coadjutor had a more splendid and daring genius, a more exact knowledge of the condition and the wants of all classes of society, a better cause, and the public favour; but the confederacy on which he leant, although brilliant and formidable, and a miracle of political skill, was built upon sand. Mazarin excelled in patient astuteness, had at command almost unlimited means of corruption in the patronage and revenues of the State, rested on the support of established power, the venerable name of a King, and the devoted attachment of one of the ablest and most resolute Princesses that ever held a sceptre. Mazarin—after many defeats, and what appeared to be utter discomfiture—finally triumphed, in consequence of the political atheism of the aristocratical party and its chief. The few nobles who were guided by any principle sought to recover their ancient power while

retaining their recent privileges, to change the Monarchy into an oligarchy; but the great majority of them were merely impelled by a spirit of rapine to plunder the State. And the conduct of Condé—who alone was in a position to curb their excesses, and even to give a patriotic direction to their energies—was conspicuous for the absence of public virtue, of statesman-like sagacity and self-control, and even of private honour. Without having the excuse of his followers for plunging into faction, for he had been gorged by the Regent with honours and offices, he sanctioned their most flagitious acts of treason towards the nation and of disloyalty towards each other by his own proceedings. Now betraying the land to the armies of Spain and the seditious license of their adherents, now lending Mazarin their swords, in return for deceitful concessions, to rivet the yoke of misgovernment, Condé and his party were content to ruin the State so that they were enriched from its spoils.

But no man nor party, no matter how richly endowed with genius and advantages of fortune can achieve permanent success by pursuing aims nakedly selfish. The personal views must be, partially at least, hidden in the shadow of some broad principle which commands the assent of the

national intelligence, or must be linked with some general interest, or some powerful sentiment that throbs with a strong pulsation in the heart of the masses. Of this truth the party of the New Fronde and their leader seemed unconscious. And each of them sought his own advantage, not only without regard to the public welfare, but without regard to the welfare of his confederates. There was no real principle of cohesion among them. They scoffed at the ties of faith and honour. Fidelity to his associates or treachery depended with each, mainly, upon his immediate inclination or interest. The consequence was that mutual distrust and the distrust of the country sapped the strength of the party. Perhaps no body of men ever possessed in a more eminent degree the talents and the courage that ordinarily command success, than the French nobles of that time. They numbered in their ranks men of the highest capacity for civil affairs. In splendid military qualities they have never been excelled. Omitting from the comparison Napoleon, who was by parentage, temperament, and all but the mere accident of conquest an Italian, and who stands apart in history, with Hannibal and Julius Cæsar, high above common rivalry, the twenty years of warfare that followed the Revolution of 1789, during

which the French armies over-ran Europe, and the martial energies and ambition, not only of every Frenchman, but of every man in the countries subject to France, were stirred into the highest emulation, not only by a vehement spirit of revolutionary propagandism, but by the great prizes in the career of arms, even kingdoms, thrown open to all, did not produce as many Generals of extraordinary merit as were found among the French Princes and nobles in the single reign of Louis XIV. Hoche, Moreau, Massena, Kleber, perhaps Dumouriez, though illustrious names, pale their light before the brighter glories of Condé, Turenne, Luxembourg, Vendôme, Villars, three of them, and those the greatest, old chiefs of the Fronde; while Harcourt, Catinat, Boufflers, and many others scarcely inferior in renown, might boast achievements which well compare with the deeds of the crowd of Republican Generals and Imperial Marshals. Even when the noblesse had greatly degenerated, it supplied the two most remarkable Frenchmen of the Revolutionary period, Mirabeau and Talleyrand. But intellect and courage without faith or virtue cannot long contend successfully against the accumulating moral force of public reprobation.

The real motives of the Royalists were, as a rule, equally interested ; but their personal objects were in a great measure concealed from the popular eye, at least after the King had attained his majority, under the decent cloak of loyalty. The very selfish instincts of the courtiers impelled them to array themselves under a banner on which a principle intelligible to the nation was inscribed, namely, the supremacy of the Crown. Labouring for themselves, they proclaimed themselves, and with truth, the defenders of the Throne and of order. They had thus, at once, a common interest and a public aim that knit them together and lent a sanction to their efforts. Union gave them strength, and their consistent support of legitimate authority, contrasting favourably in the public estimation with the profligate freaks of an unprincipled faction, drew to them in the end the sympathies of the nation. Condé and his friends not only fell through their own vices, after inflicting terrible calamities on the country, but in their fall incurred the inextinguishable guilt of dragging down public freedom with them. They drowned liberty in sedition. The wisest and best men of their own order, the patriotic Magistrates who had contended so courageously against abuses of power, the factious demagogues themselves, dreading to

be torn to pieces by their own bandogs, saw no refuge from the woes of the realm except in unconditional submission to the Royal authority. France, wasted by a civil war which exhausted the fountains of her life, delivered up her cities to the dominion of the rabble, and enabled Spain to pluck from her nerveless grasp the trophies of years of glory, painfully awoke to the conviction that anarchy is the most insupportable form of tyranny ; that even the misrule of an irresponsible Government was preferable to the organised disorder of selfish faction. And thus it came to pass that, notwithstanding that the Fronde had marshalled under its banner all the patriotism, nearly all the political and military genius, and the acknowledged representatives of the one power of the world which is more potent than genius, feminine beauty, in France ; notwithstanding also the deep hatred of Cardinal Mazarin and the bitter sense of misgovernment that rankled in the heart of the nation, the star of the Great Minister again rose in the ascendant.

The proud spirit of Condé could not brook obedience, and he quitted Paris with the remnant of his troops on the 14th of October, 1652, to join the Spanish army on the northern frontier. The Duke of Orleans hesitated with characteristic

indecision until the time for either reconciliation or resistance had passed, and was banished to Blois, where he dragged out in obscurity the remainder of his restless and unhonoured career. La Rochefoucault and Beaufort submitted and made their peace with the Regent. The seditious outrages fomented by the Prince of Conti and the Duchess of Longueville at Bordeaux had produced a bad effect throughout the whole province of Guyenne, which the efforts of Lenet and the Count of Marsin, with such feeble aid as the Princess of Condé, tottering on the verge of the grave, could render, were insufficient to counter-act. On the arrival of a fleet and army commanded by the Dukes of Vendôme and Candale, all the towns of the province made overtures of submission. Conti, with the baseness of a selfish and cowardly nature, secretly betrayed his brother, and attached himself to Mazarin, from whom he subsequently accepted a niece, Mdle. Martinozzi, a dazzling beauty with marvellous golden tresses, in marriage. This alliance of his brother, at whose entreaties he had taken up arms, with his low-born enemy was the bitterest drop in Condé's cup of humiliation. Cardinal Mazarin caused the most generous terms to be offered to the Princess of Condé, the niece of his great patron, if she

would consent to remain quietly in France. But, though not expected to survive the voyage, she insisted on embarking with her son, Lenet, and Marsin, to join her husband in Flanders, where her admirable devotion was repaid by the harshest cruelty and neglect. By a most extraordinary article of the capitulation of Bordeaux, two thousand five hundred of Marsin's troops, all Frenchmen, and revolted soldiers of the army of Catalonia, were permitted to march with flying colours across the whole kingdom, and provided on the way, at the Royal charge, with quarters and provisions, to join Condé, an attainted rebel, in the Spanish camp. Madame de Longueville retired for a time to the country seat of her aunt, the Duchess of Montmorenci, a woman of saintly life, whose exhortations and example wrought a marvellous and enduring change in the fallen Queen of the Fronde. Surviving the surrender of Bordeaux for more than twenty years, her fervent repentance and exemplary conduct won the admiration of all France, and nobly atoned for the errors of earlier years.

A few days after Condé's departure, Louis XIV. entered Paris and held a Bed of Justice, in which the Prince and his partizans were again declared traitors, the celebrated Declaration of the 24th of

October, 1648, was annulled, and the Parliament submissively registered the Royal Edict prohibiting the magistrates from ever again deliberating upon affairs of State. De Retz, the mighty demagogue, whose genius had so long revelled in social confusion as in its own proper element, to whom the roar of civil discord had been rapture, who had ruled the storms of faction with a monarch's sway, was too dangerous a personage in the jealous eyes of newly established authority to be allowed to remain long unmolested in his Archbishopric. Notwithstanding the services he had rendered against Condé, and on which he reckoned to secure for him impunity, he was, after a short respite, seized upon a charge of fomenting new disturbances, flung into the Donjon of Vincennes, and thence transferred to the distant Castle of Nantes. From this fortress he contrived, in 1654, to effect his escape, and wandered many years in poverty and exile. As some comet, to the superstitious eye of antiquity, shot athwart the heavens a mysterious herald of wrath, shaking calamities from its flaming locks, the portentous genius of De Retz had blazed in the political firmament of France, brilliant, baleful, and evanescent.

His last dangerous foe removed from the scene, Cardinal Mazarin returned in triumph, and resumed

the exercise of an unlimited authority, which was never afterwards disputed. How eloquent as a symbol of his career was the device he then assumed, a rock lashed by raging billows, and underneath the words, "*Quam frustra, et murmure quanto.*" Vain indeed had been the buffetings of the tempest. The Royal Authority, so rudely assailed, towered again in such majestic strength, struck its roots so deep and wide, bound them in such inseparable union with all the chords of the national life, that to uproot it required a convulsion which prostrated Christianity itself in common ruin, and utterly swept away institutions, customs, habits, modes of thought, even landmarks, which had formed an integral part of the nation's growth, or had been incorporated into its existence for nearly a thousand years.

## CHAPTER V.

THE seven succeeding years of Condé's life may be passed over briefly. They were spent in the councils and camps of Spain, in parricidal efforts to pierce the heart of his native country with the sword of a foreign enemy. In this part of his career one can admire nothing except the perverted genius that appeared even more extraordinary when labouring at the Titan task of supporting a decrepid Monarchy, than it had appeared when dealing the lightning blows which made that Monarchy totter to its base. His energy and military talent assumed proportions perfectly marvellous in contrast with the feeble, though arrogant incapacity of the Spanish Generals. The retreat from Arras, the forcing of Turenne's lines at Valenciennes, the relief of Cambray, accomplished by him almost in spite of his allies, rank among the most brilliant achieve-

ments of warfare. But his efforts were barren, except of dubious glory to himself. Not even his fiery spirit could infuse life into Spanish lethargy, or thaw the cold obstruction of Spanish pride. The resources of Spain, although still fed by a perennial stream of treasure from the Indies, were sapped by misgovernment. The bones of the veteran battalions which had shielded her decline, whitened the plains of Rocroi and Lens. And the haughty arrogance, the natural growth of irresistible power, which had descended to her children with the heritage of great deeds and illustrious names, was not only ridiculous but fatal, flaunting over mere decay. It prevented the Monarchy profiting by the abilities of the most successful Captain of the age, and kept alive an exaggerated opinion of Spain's strength in other nations of Europe, where the ignorant and the prejudiced still trembled at the bugbear of Spanish power, the mere phantom of what had been a living menace to their forefathers.

It was the policy of Cromwell, when he had subverted the Commonwealth, to distract the attention of the English nation from the unaccustomed evils of a military tryanny, and to find employment for the dangerous spirits of the army by foreign

expeditions; and his alliance was courted with the most eager solicitude by France and Spain. A brilliant modern school of English historians, turning away in the disgust of satiety from the familiar spectacle of equitable government and ordered freedom, have borrowed from the darkest ages of paganism the practice of glorifying the lawless passions of humanity; until, in the apotheosis of force, fraud, cruelty, and selfishness, we almost see reviving amongst us, in a more intellectual form, heathen superstition in its most debasing phase—the worship of monsters. Enemies of the human race, whose memories have come down to us black with crimes, and laden with the curses of mankind, are—if they have been but successful—exalted as demi-gods; while their victims, the martyrs of right and justice, are covered with calumny and insult. It is only by the demoralising influence of such teaching that the modern idolatry which burns incense to Cromwell can be explained. His career was the triumph of brute force and cunning, stimulated by fanaticism—a fanaticism which acted in complete subordination to his personal ambition, and in complete harmony with the habitual hypocrisy and dissimulation, and the un-

scrupulous policy which concealed and accomplished his designs. That he merits the praise of being affectionate in his domestic relations may be freely admitted, for, after all, he was human; and that he was a very extraordinary man is attested by his astonishing career. But his ambition was sordid and ruthless, and his genius was of the lowest order—the genius of destruction. His attempts at constructing proved egregious, and even ridiculous, failures during his own lifetime. The master-spirits of the world, to whom he has been sometimes compared, redeemed the evils of their rule, and perpetuated their names by great and enduring structures, which command the admiration or gratitude of posterity. The Roman Empire, which survived in all its changes for more than eighteen hundred years, was the legacy of Julius Cæsar. The Civil Code, the marvellous organisation, and some of the most magnificent public works of modern France, form a fitting monument to the genius of Napoleon. Cromwell left behind him only ruins—the ruins of an ancient Monarchy and of a new Republic; and his name lives in association with desolate fanes and shattered castles, and burning memories of cruelty and wrong. Nor since the death of Attila

has Europe been afflicted with the scourge of a destroyer so terrible and remorseless.

There never was a Government in England so tyrannical or so hateful to the nation as the Protectorate. It was a military despotism, in comparison with which the tyranny of Charles I. was a mild and humanising yoke. The country was portioned out into eleven districts, each under the command of a major-general, who, at will, imprisoned the persons and confiscated the estates of individuals, obnoxious on account of their principles or their wealth, under the sole authority of the Lord Protector. All but a small minority of the inhabitants qualified to exercise the franchise were deprived of political rights. Trial by jury in political causes was practically abolished by the instituting of a High Court of Justice, and the mandates of the Council of State. Laws were enacted, enormous annual contributions were imposed, the entire administration was absolutely directed by a small knot of successful adventurers, who registered the decrees of an irresponsible master at Whitehall. Three kingdoms were governed by the sword, and steeped in miseries, not that some salutary public object might be achieved, but because an ambitious soldier desired to erect for

himself the throne he had overturned, on the ruins of the Republic he had betrayed.

Several times during his rule Cromwell sought to veil his despotism under the forms of a free Government by calling a Parliament. But, notwithstanding the iron grasp of his Major-Generals on the skeleton constituencies, and the forcible exclusion of all independent representatives from the Palace of Westminster on the high constitutional grounds that, in the cant of the Saints, they were tainted with malignancy, or delinquency, or immorality, he was never able to collect together a body of Englishmen sufficiently base to become pliant tools of his ambition. Each Parliament, after a short trial, was publicly reviled by him, and then ignominiously cashiered for imputed backslidings from virtue. He attached to himself the fanatical soldiers who upheld his usurpation by arts analogous to those with which Mohammed or Mahomet had duped his Arabian followers. Joining frequently in their pious exercises, his preachings and his prayers, conceived in a turgid vein of semi-delirious mysticism—a grotesque travesty of the sublime imagery and the shadowy grandeur of the sacred writings—and poured forth in a simulated fervour of inspiration, cheated their diseased fancies into the belief that he was filled with the

Divine Spirit, that he was the chosen instrument of the Most High to establish the reign of Christ upon earth. Not that his pretensions to supernatural enlightenment were altogether charlatanism. Like the Prophet of Islam, he was to some extent a genuine enthusiast; but his enthusiasm was deeply tinctured with craft, and was used to sustain conscious imposture. All his artifices, however, failed to induce the devout warriors, who had made and could at any moment unmake him, and who, even in their most blasphemous hallucinations, were sincere, to connive at a national sin, by sanctioning his assumption of the Crown, the prize which so long dazzled and mocked his aspirations. In the end, his hypocrisy—although profound and continually fortified by profane appeals to Heaven—became too worn from incessant use to mask even from pious credulity the personal character of his aims. Detested by the whole nation, by the half that he had deceived, as well as by the half that he had vanquished; destitute of the means of paying the army that held it in subjection; broken in mind and body, by sickness, domestic calamity, and perpetual terrors of assassination, but to the last the dupe of religious delusion, the blaze of military and naval triumph that closed his domination,

gilded miserable failure. And probably the 3rd of September deserved the title of his fortunate day more for rescuing him by a peaceful death from a tragic, if not shameful fall, from an untenable position, than because of his victories at Worcester and Dunbar.

The panegyrists of Cromwell rest his claims to admiration as a ruler chiefly on the grandeur and success of his foreign policy. The able and vigorous statesmen of the Long Parliament, by the fleets and armies they created, and the haughty attitude they assumed towards foreign States, had raised the fame and power of England abroad to an unexampled height: and a large share of the glory and advantage of their measures was inherited by the Protector. But his own foreign policy was selfish blundering. The slight which had been passed by Charles I. on the Spanish Infanta had caused a permanent estrangement between the Courts of Madrid and St. James's. The Spanish Government had been the first to recognize the Commonwealth, and had maintained cordial relations with it to the end. But Cromwell, being unable to obtain from a Parliament the grants of money he needed, and being afraid of increasing the clamours and resistance provoked by the arbitrary levying of contributions, looked

with a covetous eye on the rich colonies and the treasure ships of Spain. Also regarding the exiled Charles Stuart as a personal rival, the claim which near relationship gave this Prince to assistance from the House of Bourbon led the Protector to desire a French alliance for his own security. In contempt of existing treaties, which not only good faith, but gratitude and the interests of England should have guarded from violation, he despatched an expedition to attack the West India possessions and plunder the commerce of Spain. The enterprise failed disgracefully. It called forth loud and almost unanimous disapproval at home, more particularly from the English merchants. Philip IV., although reluctant to enter upon a new conflict, to which his exhausted monarchy was unequal, protested with dignity against the Protector's perfidy and withdrew his Ambassador.

While affairs were in this state, fabulous narratives, which took shape for the greater part in the heated brains of Calvinist Ministers at Geneva, of horrible cruelties practised by the Duke of Savoy upon the Vaudois, threw England into a ferment. The Vaudois, a Protestant people in the valleys of Piedmont, who enjoyed the free exercise of their religion under a Catholic

Sovereign, having risen in rebellion without just cause, were defeated in a struggle disgraced by barbarities on both sides, and expelled from their territory. At a time when a "Popish Massacre" was the term applied to the legitimate attempt of Catholics to vindicate their civil and religious rights by arms, stories of unprovoked outrage upon their foreign brethren were sure to meet with greedy acceptance among the Puritans. The small dominant sect of enthusiasts who had endeavoured to exterminate the Irish Catholics, and who proscribed the worship of the majority of English Protestants, were especially vehement in indignant denunciation of an imaginary religious persecution. Cromwell joyfully seized the opportunity of appearing before Europe in the august character of champion of the reformed faith. The Vaudois, though reported to be perishing from cold and hunger amidst the snows of the Alps, unhesitatingly declined his offer of a settlement on confiscated lands in Ireland. But he sent Morland, as ambassador, to Turin, to mediate in their favour, and he demanded the co-operation of the King of France. Cardinal Mazarin, however, foreseeing that the disturbances in Piedmont would obstruct the treaty of alliance with England, which he ardently de-

sired, had lost no time in exercising the pressure of a powerful neighbour and ally upon the Duke of Savoy. Morland, on arriving at Geneva, found reason to distrust the statements of the Swiss Protestants, and his mediation was civilly declined by the Court of Turin. But Mazarin was able to inform the Protector that an amnesty had been granted to the insurgents through the friendly offices of Louis XIV., and that peace and good fellowship again reigned in the Alpine valleys.

This happy termination of the quarrel greatly raised the reputation of Cromwell, as it was evidently solicitude for his friendship that had dictated the intervention of the French Government; and it gained for France a potent ally against the Spaniards. Six thousand English troops were sent to join the army of Marshal Turenne. The Governor of the Spanish Netherlands at that time was Don John of Austria, son of Philip IV. and a Madrid actress, a young man full of presumption, and guided by an incapable Mentor, the Marquis of Caracena. The combined forces of France and England laid siege to Dunkirk, which was only defended by a garrison of one thousand men, destitute of supplies. Don John advanced hastily from Brussels with about fourteen thousand men, to relieve the place, leav-

ing all his artillery behind. Turenne, issuing from his lines, found the Spaniards in a position in which their cavalry, nearly one-half of their entire strength, was practically useless, while their right wing rested on an open roadstead; and a great battle, known as the Battle of the Downs, was fought. Through the errors of the Spanish Generals, the military skill of Turenne, the valour of the English regiments, and the opportune arrival of some English frigates, which, in the heat of the conflict, opened fire on the exposed flank of the Spaniards, the Allies won a complete victory. Condé's advice had been contemptuously rejected in the Spanish Council of War, his prophetic warnings had been received with scornful incredulity. It was only his brilliant charges at the head of the small body of French Cavalry which followed his fortunes, that for a time kept the day doubtful, and saved the beaten army from annihilation. "My cousin," the King of Spain wrote to him, with courteous exaggeration, "I hear that everything was lost and that you retrieved everything."

The fruits to France of the victory of the Downs were the advantageous peace of the Pyrenees, which prepared the way for the establishment of the House of Bourbon on the Spanish

throne; and her military preponderance under Louis XIV. The fruits to England were the costly acquisition of Dunkirk, afterwards sold by Charles II.; and the expenditure of oceans of blood and millions of treasure in a long series of efforts to destroy that military preponderance which was partly her own work; efforts, marked by the signal defeats of Steinkirk and Landen, of Almanza and Villa Viciosa, as well as by the splendid triumphs of Blenheim, Ramillies, and Oudenarde, and of which her national debt is a perpetual memorial. Cromwell's short-sighted foreign policy did not even promote the selfish ends he had proposed to himself. His dynastic schemes perished with him. His armaments drained his treasury and loaded him with debts; and the London merchants were so irritated by the losses occasioned to their trade by the rupture with Spain, that they refused to relieve the desperate financial difficulties which clouded with anxiety the last months of his life.

It must be confessed that if Spanish presumption and immobility had cramped Condé's operations in war, Spanish honour and fidelity nobly guarded his interests in the negotiations for peace. His restoration to all his estates, dignities, and employments, was strenuously insisted on by Don

Louis de Haro, the Prime Minister of Spain, and as obstinately resisted by Cardinal Mazarin in their long conferences on the Island of Pheasants, in the Bidassoa. The Prince generously offered to forego his claims in order to promote the pacification of Europe. But Don Louis refused to purchase a treaty on which the very existence of his exhausted country seemed to depend, by the sacrifice of a brave ally. He threatened that his master would endow the French Prince with an independent territory on the borders of France. To avoid this danger, and in consideration of the cession of Avesnes and its dependencies, Mazarin consented to reinstate Condé and his followers, with the exception of the Count of Marsin, in the advantageous positions they had forfeited by rebellion.

## CHAPTER VI.

ON his return to France at the end of the year 1659 Condé, after a brief visit to the Court, withdrew to Chantilly, where he passed in almost complete retirement the greater part of the eight following years. The jealous ascendancy of Cardinal Mazarin, and after that Minister's death, in the year 1661, the lingering distrust of the young King, condemned the Prince to a state of inaction, which became torture to his fiery spirit, when the kingdom again resounded with joyous peals for the triumphs of its arms in Flanders. But he bore his lot without a murmur. Adversity had made him wise. He had too long tasted exile and dependence, the bitter fruits of faction, to dream of cultivating that ungrateful soil again. Even had he wished to do so, it was no longer possible. The times of political confusion were gone by. France was no longer the France of

his turbulent youth. She had passed from the throes of a great change into another phase of her life; a development excelling in grandeur and symmetry, but not vivified by the breath, nor ennobled by the dignity of freedom. Long before Louis, won by Condé's great qualities, and evident anxiety to atone for the past, called him forth again into active employment, the slow revolution which had been initiated by Louis XI., and had received such a mighty impulse from Richelieu, was consummated. The Fronde had flooded the land with a deluge of faction, and when the troubled waters subsided, the jurisdiction of the nobles, the political privileges of the Parliaments, provincial and municipal liberties, the wrecks that had remained of the venerable system of mediæval polity, all but the mere framework of feudal society, had disappeared for ever, absorbed in the growth of the most brilliant, despotic, and powerfully organized monarchy that had as yet been seen in modern Europe.

It may be doubted whether history presents to us many subjects of deeper interest, whether it be viewed in relation to its own greatness and splendour, which marked an epoch in civilization, or in relation to its permanent effects upon the political and social condition of France, than the

old French Monarchy, in the reign of Louis XIV. During the first twenty years of Louis' personal rule that Monarchy reached its culminating point. In its magnificence and its vigour, bright with all glory and with every charm, it was at once the marvel and the terror of the age. Power almost colossal, profound policy, the triumphs of war and of peace, the solemn pomp of religion, the inspiration of poetry and art, the sublime conquests of science, the flashing beams of wit, the lofty graces of chivalrous nobility, the bewitching graces of lovely, refined, and intellectual women, invested it with a grandeur and a beauty which still dazzle through the deepening twilight of two hundred years. The position of Louis XIV. was the most intoxicating that the imagination can well conceive. Of France, which, welded into indissoluble union by the deep State-craft of Richelieu and Mazarin, fostered and developed during years of peace by the wisdom of Colbert, elated with recent military successes, and filled with a warlike population, organised by Louvois, and led by Turenne, had attained a state of compact strength, prosperity, and martial ardour that menaced the independence of Europe, he was absolute master. No man—no body of men—in the kingdom ventured to dispute his will. Im-

plicit submission had come to be regarded in France as the highest political virtue. His Court was the most brilliant and polished that modern Europe has seen. It was a great focus of the human intellect, of the attributes and the arts that glorify and embellish life. No other age, perhaps, has seen, revolving around one centre, so splendid and various a system of genius as that which encircled with undying lustre the throne of the Great King. Colbert and Louvois, Condé and Turenne, Racine and Molière, Pascal and Sévigné, Descartes and Buffon, Mansard and Perrault, Bossuet and Bourdaloue shed on his royalty the light of the mind in rich prismatic rays, adorned it with the noblest trophies. At Versailles or at Fontainebleau, he breathed an atmosphere of flattery almost idolatrous; the flattery of men whose praise was immortality, the flattery of women, which meant all that youth, beauty, and the sparkling graces of refined intellect could proffer to passion. A consummate statesman, unlocking throughout his kingdom new springs of industry and enterprise, flooded it with a golden tide of prosperity. Consummate warriors made his arms the terror of Europe. To his toiling energies, peace and war alike presented the enchanted cup of glory. To his voluptuous

leisure ministered the arts of a refined luxury, not less seductive than the gorgeous dreams of young ambition, and beauty more eloquent than the almost inspired eloquence of Massillon.

The dictatorial spirit that belonged to his Government at home, Louis carried into his relations with foreign States less powerful than France. England, bound hand and foot by his policy, connived at, or openly aided his aggressions. Not only Charles II., ever spendthrift and needy, and Charles's Ministers, but the chiefs of the English opposition—the patriots, as they styled themselves—were his pensioners. The bribes eagerly clutched by members of the Cabal were not disdained by the austere virtue of Algernon Sydney. The States-General of the United Netherlands, having given mortal offence to the French Monarch by a Republican independence of bearing, which to him seemed insolent presumption, the Dutch Commonwealth contested the dominion of the seas in a memorable struggle against the combined navies of France and England, while French armies overran its provinces, and brought it to the brink of ruin.

Spain, though shorn of her former power and prestige, still clung to her lofty pretensions with a desperate tenacity. Her ambassadors still

claimed precedence over those of the other leading powers. Louis, however, far from acknowledging a superior, would not brook an equal. The consequence was that the rivalry between the Count D'Estrades, his representative at the English Court, and the Spanish representative, Vatteville, caused a dangerous tumult in London, in which the horses under D'Estrades' coach were killed, and his son and several attendants were wounded. This insult deeply incensed the French King. He sent passports to the Spanish Ambassador in Paris; and his menaces were enforced by such formidable military preparations that Spain shrank from the conflict. Philip IV. made a formal apology, and issued new instructions to his ambassadors, which practically acknowledged the pre-eminence of the French Crown.

Still more signal was the humiliation of the Pope. The Duke of Crequi, French Minister at Rome, having quarrelled with the brother of His Holiness, the insolence of Crequi's domestics provoked a collision with the Corsican Guards, in which some Frenchmen were killed. The Pontiff at once commanded ample reparation to be made, more even than strict justice seemed to require. Some of the soldiers concerned in the riot were hanged, and the Governor of Rome was dis-

missed for negligence. But Louis rejected this atonement with scorn. In order to avert the swift vengeance of the eldest son of the Church, the Pope had to disband his guards, to exile his brother, to send his nephew, Cardinal Chigi, to ask forgiveness at Paris, and to erect, within view of the Vatican, a monument recording the abasement of the Vice-Gerent of Heaven before the arrogant majesty of the most Christian King.

It was, however, into the haughty spirit of the ancient Republic of Genoa that the iron of Louis' arbitrary domination entered deepest. Genoa was no longer the powerful State whose merchantmen, freighted with the products of the East, covered the Mediterranean, whose martial prowess had alternately shaken and sustained the Greek Empire, and been a bulwark of Christendom against the Moslem power. The discovery of the Cape of Good Hope, by diverting Eastern commerce into a new channel, had cut off the springs of Genoa's greatness. But still, guarded by the waves that had fed her prosperity and borne the tributes of every clime to her feet, the Queen of the Mediterranean preserved the freedom and the generous spirit of more fortunate days. An honourable alliance had existed since the days of Andrew Doria between Genoa and Spain; and

when the aggressions of Louis provoked fresh hostilities between Spain and France, after the peace of Nimeguen, the Genoese equipped a fleet to support their old ally. The French Monarch, amazed at the audacity of a petty State in thus braving his power, sent the Genoese orders, in the imperious tone of a master, to disarm. The proud Republicans answered by a defiance. With a promptitude unexampled in that age, an irresistible naval force, under the command of the celebrated Duquesne, appeared before Genoa. Thirteen thousand bombs flung into the beautiful city reduced it to ruin and submission. By a fundamental law of the Republic, the Doge could not leave its territory without forfeiting his dignity. But even this antique constitution, linked to so many glorious memories, had to do homage to the pride of Louis. The chief magistrate Lescari, attended by four of the principal citizens, appeared as a suppliant for pardon in the presence-chamber of Versailles. When, afterwards, all the marvels of that prodigy of wasteful folly, where amidst scenes created at a fabulous cost to perpetuate the glories of the monarchy, ambassadors from the most remote regions of Africa and Asia mingled in the crowd of European celebrities, were pointed out to the Doge with compla-

cent vanity, and he was asked what of all he saw most excited his astonishment, "The most astonishing thing to me," he answered, "is to see myself here." On his return to Genoa, the Senate, suspending the operation of the laws in compliance with the hard conditions imposed upon them, retained Lescari in an office which thus became the badge of his own dishonour and the servitude of his country.

Although the political position of France in the reign of Louis XIV. was so commanding, the ascendancy she acquired at the same period in the domain of thought was not only loftier and more legitimate, but was far more extensive and permanent. The graceful labours of French genius in every department of literature, science, and art, and the extraordinary capabilities of the French mind and the French language for appropriating and diffusing ideas, gave her the foremost place among civilized nations. Paris became the centre of modern civilization—the capital of Europe. In all that related to letters, to taste, to manners, the French canons were the laws of the Continent. The French tongue was the language of literature, of diplomacy, and of polished life. The tragedies of Racine, the comedies of Moliere, the Provincial Letters,

were soon as familiar to the polite circles of Berlin or Vienna as to those of Paris. And long after Louis' reign had closed in gloom, and all but the memory of its glory had passed away; when a Pompadour ruled the councils and a Soubise led the armies of France, and her power had become a scoff, the unquestioned supremacy of French genius avenged the humiliation of French arms, and the mighty spell which its magic flung upon Europe, binding victorious foes in intellectual bondage, was more potent than ever.

The transition which carried France from the weakness and disunion of the period of the Fronde to the predominance she assumed fifteen years later, seems, at the first view, one of the most rapid and startling in history. But the splendid despotism of Louis XIV. was merely the natural result of general causes which had long been in operation; though doubtless that result was stamped with a peculiar character, by the action of individual minds. The ancient feudal power of the nobility had been undermined in the progress of society, laid in ruins by the blows of Richelieu, swept away in the unsuccessful revolt of the Fronde. The Tiers État vanquished in the noble struggle which the Parliament of Paris

maintained for their protection ; moreover, sick of civil wars, in which turbulent princes and nobles used the popular grievances as masks for their own selfish schemes, desired only repose under a strong Government. The consequence was that the royal authority grew into a "despotism tempered by epigrams."

Mazarin, thoroughly understanding the crisis, assisted its development with rare and unscrupulous skill. On his return to France, after Condé was expelled, the Cardinal once more grasped the entire direction of the State. The King, although legally of age, was still a boy. The Queen-mother continued to the end completely devoted to her favourite. All opposition to his rule within the kingdom was crushed out, and, during an absolute administration that terminated only with his life, he employed all the resources of his deep policy to refine, to humanize, and to corrupt society. He founded the opera at Paris, collected an unrivalled library, and was a judicious patron of learning, and of all the fine arts. By his example and influence he promoted sumptuous habits, gorgeous pageants, and all luxurious and elegant amusements. To supply a safe channel for the feverish energies of the nobles, no longer permitted to expend themselves in political struggles,

he encouraged gambling, and even cheating at cards, provided it was clever. The passion for high play seized upon all, with its usual terrible fascination, and the vicissitudes of the gaming-table opened a wide door for corruption. The needy noble who had staked and lost his last crown-piece or his patrimonial chateau at hazard, or the ruined magistrate, was but too happy to find a resource in the bounty of the Minister. It was difficult to recognise, in the courtly flatterers who crowded Mazarin's ante-chambers, the furious patriots of other days, whose zeal had never wearied in reviling him as a public enemy. A spirit of luxury, of ostentation, of venality, seen in its best and worst aspects in the career of the generous and ill-fated Fouquet, soon began to infect the whole kingdom ; softening down the ferocious habits contracted during a troubled period, but gradually destroying the lofty spirit of independence, which, in nobles and magistrates, had been the nurse of masculine virtues.

But perhaps the individual whose personal influence contributed most powerfully to produce such a marvellous change in the condition of France was the young King himself. If there had been few Princes who during their life-time so habitually breathed an atmosphere of flattery

as Louis the Great, there are few whose memories have been exposed to harsher criticism or more unjust depreciation. In the natural reaction of opinion the writers of Modern France seek to degrade from his pedestal one whom they detest as the impersonation of that arbitrary system, the abuses of which plunged their country into the catastrophe of 1793. Brilliant English writers of the Whig school have as eagerly disparaged the magnificent potentate whose greatness dwarfed the greatness of their idol, William of Orange. Both deal unfairly with the character of a very extraordinary man.

The reign of Louis, which began almost with his life, was, as has been shown, cradled in civil dissensions. While the Princes of the Blood and the great nobles desolated his kingdom in order to despoil his crown, the unscrupulous greed of the Minister, whose puppet he was, left him sometimes in want of the necessities of life. Mazarin's lust of power inflicted on his young sovereign injuries far worse than the poverty occasioned by his avarice. Louis was taught to ride, to dance, to take part in pageants, to excel in manly sports and graceful accomplishments. But in the scheme of the young King's education, which the Cardinal jealously superintended, history, politics,

every study that tended to develope his mind, awaken his ambition, or teach him to govern, was carefully interdicted. Nor was this all. There are strong grounds for at least grave suspicion, there is the direct testimony on the point of the faithful La Porte, that the Cardinal resorted to means of weakening the intellect of his sovereign more odious than the exclusion of invigorating knowledge, or the influence of trivial pursuits. But the natural abilities of Louis were of the first order; and he had inherited from his mother a strength of character even greater than his abilities. Mazarin, towards the close of his career, when he felt himself withering in the icy clasp of the only enemy whom his wiles could not foil, laboured earnestly to repair the injury which his guilty ambition had caused. He then discovered, to use his own words, that Louis had in him the materials of "four good Kings and one honest man." He strove unremittingly by his counsels, by opening to his royal pupil the stores of his vast experience, the hived-up State-craft of an unrivalled politician, to teach Louis the science of governing despotically. Still Mazarin never relaxed his hold of the reins of power for a moment. To the last hour of his life he monopolised the administration. Louis did not venture

to grant the slightest favour without asking his Minister's permission. The Cardinal, remaining seated and covered, received his sovereign every morning in his cabinet, and chid Louis, after he had attained man's estate and had married, with as much freedom as though he were still a child. The young King, fettered by long habit, and still more by gratitude for the immense services Mazarin had rendered the French Crown, studiously concealed the burning impatience to rule that consumed him. Engrossed apparently by the pleasures that crown youth and greatness as with a magic garland, he expected in silence the death of his great Minister.

Mazarin died in the year 1661, at the age of fifty-nine, the richest subject in Europe. Although he had permitted the public revenues to be mismanaged, and dissipated in luxury and corruption by the Controller General Fouquet, he confided the care of his own fortune to a young and obscure man, in whom his penetration had discovered extraordinary genius for finance. At the close of his life he presented this able servant to Louis, saying, "Sir, I owe your Majesty everything, but I believe I can repay you by giving you Monsieur Colbert." In order to screen his vast riches from inquiry after his death, and perhaps to

appease the cries of his conscience, the Cardinal when he saw his end approaching, conveyed all his possessions by deed to the King. Louis retained them for a day, and then gave them back to the dying Minister as a free gift. The amiable side of Mazarin's character was in nothing more visible than in the strength of his family affections. He had charged himself after he became Prime Minister with the education and fortunes of his six charming and accomplished nieces, the eldest three of whom had been favourite targets for the wit and scurrility of the Fronde, and all of whom afterwards played distinguished parts on the stage of life. By the marriages of Laura Mancini and her beautiful cousin, the Countess Martinozzi, with the Duke of Mercœur and the Prince of Conti, he had allied his obscure race with the House of Bourbon. Olympia Mancini, the object of the boyish passion of the young King, married the Count of Soissons, son of Prince Thomas of Savoy, became mother of the famous Prince Eugene, and, later on, inspired horror and fear in every Court of Europe by her crimes. Between Louis and Marie Mancini, the next sister, there sprang up a mutual attachment of the most ardent kind. It required all the authority and influence of Anne of Austria to

prevail on the King to conquer his inclination to make the fair Italian Queen of France. The Cardinal removed her from Court, and gave her in marriage to the Constable Colonna, the chief of the family that had fostered his own early fortunes. The hand of Hortense, the most beautiful of the sisters Mancini, was sought in vain by Charles II. of England, during his exile, and rejected by him after the Restoration. The Cardinal then selected the son of his old friend, Marshal la Meilleraie, for her husband, and made them the inheritors of his name, his honours, and the bulk of his enormous wealth. Hortense was the celebrated Duchess of Mazarin.

It may not be out of place to notice the strange mystery of the Man of the Iron Mask, in connexion with the Cardinal's death. Immediately after this event the unfortunate prisoner, whose story has so excited and baffled curiosity, was committed to close confinement in the Castle of Pignerol. He was afterwards transferred to the Bastille, and, although treated with even deferential respect, his features were jealously shrouded from the eyes of his jailors by a vizard of black velvet, until the grave swallowed up his secret in the year 1703. The theory respecting him which has the greatest show of probability is that which

makes him the son of Anne of Austria and Cardinal Mazarin. It has been confidently asserted, indeed, that the Queen was secretly wedded to her favourite during the Regency. But the Cardinal, although not a priest, had been admitted to ecclesiastical orders, which precluded marriage; and neither his antecedents nor those of his mistress placed them above the suspicion of an irregular attachment. The pride and the affections of Louis were alike interested to shield the reputation of his mother; and the maxims of his Government would oppose no impediment to the perpetual seclusion of her unfortunate offspring.

When the death of his Minister was announced to him, the young Monarch, released from a ceaseless struggle between his sense of intolerable restraint, and his repugnance to displace one to whom the French Crown owed so much, exclaimed, "I do not know what I should have done, had he lived any longer." The Court became rife with intrigues for the vacant post of Prime Minister. It seemed to many that Condé, who of late had been rapidly growing in the Royal favour, had the best chance of success. But Louis had determined, by the advice of Mazarin, to govern for himself. When de Harlai, President of the

Assembly of the Clergy, inquired to whom he was to address himself on public business for the future, the King replied, "To me." The courtiers smiled, and speculated among themselves for how long their gay, pleasure-loving sovereign would continue to waste his hours upon affairs of State. But the Royal bird, whose bright plumage dazzled them, was, in truth, an eagle, and had already begun his flight towards the sun. They soon saw, with wonder, that the docile trifier, whose highest aim seemed to be to excel in the chase, to lead a galliard with matchless grace, or to storm the bower of some coy beauty, had shot up, with a growth as sudden as that of the gourd of the Prophet, into the strongest, ablest, and most laborious ruler that had ever grasped the sceptre of the Capets.

Of unusual personal beauty, a majestic mien, and a bearing that personified dignity and grace, his every look, tone, and gesture proclaiming the Monarch; magnificent in his tastes, liberal to profusion, yet discriminating in his generosity, thirsting after fame with an insatiable thirst, a despot by nature and by position, but making despotism attractive by noble qualities and gracious manners; uniting to rapid penetration, cool judgment, and an iron will, a lively imagination which, ever

aspiring to reproduce in life its own ideal of a King clothed with the glorious attributes of a deity, lent to his aims and actions a striking and somewhat theatrical, grandeur, Louis was exactly the Prince to become the idol of the French people. His subjects, weary alike of anarchy and of the long rule of Cardinal Mazarin, dazzled and awed by the majesty, the captivating grace, and the brilliant promise of their young sovereign, hailed his assumption of the reins of Government with enthusiasm. Louis succeeded in converting this fervid feeling of loyalty into a deep and lasting sentiment. His character was far from perfect; but it was his rare good fortune that its vices as well as its virtues promoted the consolidation of his authority. His most conspicuous faults as an absolute ruler were, in the more prosperous period of his reign, an arrogant egotism ever urging him on to spoliation and warfare, and to prodigious expenditure which ministered to his vanity but impoverished his kingdom; and the open practice of an unbridled licentiousness. He allowed the phantoms of false ambition to lure him from the wiser policy of developing the resources of his realm in peace into a career of aggression, in which he deluged Europe with blood and tears, only in the end to make shipwreck of his own

greatness and of the welfare of his people. But this policy of aggrandisement presented almost irresistible attractions to the young monarch of a restless nation, which had but just emerged from a state of turbulence, surrounded as he was by military nobles impatient of inaction, having at command the greatest captains of the age, and having for neighbours and antagonists small or decrepid states. In indulging his passion for war he at first only floated on the current of national feeling, and did not transgress the maxims of prudent, if unscrupulous, Statecraft. In enterprises inspired mainly by the personal pride and ostentation of their ruler, his subjects saw only a patriotic solicitude for the honour of France. And so long as genius, seconded by fortune and wielding resources yet undiminished, continued to crown daring projects with splendid success, the nation, wrapped in a dream of glory, abandoned its destinies, without a murmur, to a King, whom it almost worshipped as a God.

Again, the licentiousness which, personified in a succession of mistresses, long ruled the Court of Louis with more than queenly pomp and sway, cradled as it was in the lap of refinement, clothed by the graces with every charm, breathing the incense of every muse, not only enthralled in con-

genial fetters a young, gay, and polished nobility, but even borrowed some attractions from virtue for those who remembered the coarse debauchery of the Regency of Anne of Austria.

To counterbalance these vices, which, being characteristic of the French nation, aided the firm establishment of his authority, the kingly virtues and qualifications of Louis were manifold and conspicuous. His abilities as a statesman were first-rate. His application to the business of the State was laborious and unremitting; his decisions were always carefully weighed, and generally were dispassionate. He was gifted in a rare degree with the faculty of promptly recognising men of superior merit. These he diligently sought out and preferred in every department of his service, listened to their advice, and gave them his entire confidence and support. To genius Louis was a munificent and discriminating patron. Intellectual superiority of every kind won from him an instant and generous acknowledgment. Nor was his bounty in this respect limited by the confines of his own dominions. His device was the sun, and he wished the rays of his royal beneficence to penetrate throughout the world. He not only invited celebrated men from foreign countries to adorn the Academies of Inscriptions,

Painting and Sculpture, Architecture, and Sciences which he formed at Paris, calling to the last-named Cassini from Italy, Huygens from Holland, and Römer from Denmark; but he thought it incumbent on him, as far as possible, to repair the injustice of fortune to struggling genius in every land. There was hardly a country in Europe, no matter what its political relations with France, in which some gifted intellect, pining in penury and neglect, did not find its labours encouraged or its decline cheered by a delicate munificence, which did not offer a favour, but a tribute to the sovereignty of the mind from the Great King. No monarch was ever more liberal of praise and of reward for service, or more scrupulously slow to censure; ever displayed less of caprice or of distrust in his relations with the servants of the Crown, less of the royal vice of ingratitude, or more of greatness of mind in overlooking personal affronts and injuries. No monarch ever granted a favour with so much delicacy or such enchanting grace. And although, as he said himself, every benefit he conferred made one person ungrateful and many discontented, he never allowed disappointment to ruffle the flow of his beneficence. The repugnance which he felt to inflict pain on an old minister or general was sometimes detrimental

to the public interests. He was just and magnanimous in his personal relations, a generous and indulgent master, a warm and constant friend, a placable enemy.

Yet, notwithstanding the noble and amiable qualities that made Louis XIV the greatest, and, by nature, one of the best monarchs of France, there is perhaps no other reign, partly by reason of faults of character in the ruler, but far more by reason of the position he inherited, the scenes and traditions in which he had been educated, and the abject spirit of his time, so fertile in abuses of power, in harsh and arbitrary suppression of the rights of individuals and of communities, so fraught with ruin to the French Monarchy. Long before his power had begun visibly to wane, its external splendour concealed incurable decay, and almost incredible misery and meanness. The gift of Colbert, which the dying Mazarin had made to his sovereign, was one of the most precious a King could possess. The secret assistance of this able adviser having enabled Louis to detect the frauds by means of which the Superintendent of Finance, Fouquet, sought to hide his enormous peculations, he imprisoned the unfaithful Minister for life, and appointed Colbert to conduct the internal administration of the kingdom. In a very few

years Louis, following the wise councils of the great statesman, had brought the finances to a flourishing condition, almost without example in France ; had fostered trade and agriculture into extraordinary activity, established the East India Company, and planted colonies to give an impulse and an outlet to commerce ; created a fleet which, under a succession of famous Admirals, became a worthy rival of the navies of England and Holland ; improved the administration of justice and the police ; enriched, embellished and humanised the kingdom, and especially the Capital, by works of tasteful magnificence and of utility, which still attest his claims to the admiration of mankind, and by a liberal encouragement of all the arts of peace.

But associated with Colbert was another Minister, not inferior in ability, though of opposite character and aims, to whom the business of foreign relations was entrusted. This was Louvois, the son of Mazarin's old Secretary Le Tellier, and perhaps the greatest War Minister that ever lived ; who, devoured by vanity, ambition, and jealousy, strove incessantly to lure his sovereign from the pursuit of pacific triumphs by dazzling his only too susceptible imagination with visions of the power and glory to be won in a career of foreign

conquest. After the death of Philip IV. of Spain, and of Anne of Austria, Louis, listening to the flattering voice of his evil genius, in preference to the earnest remonstrances of Colbert and Turenne, claimed the Spanish Netherlands in right of his wife ; and in 1667 invaded them at the head of a superb army of fifty thousand men. Turenne, as Marshal General, directed the operations. Town after town fell to the French arms, which advanced without a check, until, in the following year, the triple alliance of England, Holland, and Sweden, induced the French King to conclude a peace, which left him in possession of all his Flemish acquisitions. This brief war, although it somewhat crippled Colbert's beneficent policy, did not inflict any serious wound upon the prosperity of the kingdom.

But when in 1772, Louis having made himself secure of the co-operation or neutrality of Charles II. of England, by the treaty of Dover, and the fascinations of Louise de Querouailles, attacked the Dutch with armaments on a scale so vast and complete as to terrify the other leading States of the Continent into a coalition against France, the strain of such a gigantic struggle as no modern European nation had hitherto sustained, reduced the monarchy to a state of exhaustion,

for which the immense glory and the additional territory acquired were but a poor equivalent. The wars that followed the peace of Nimeguen, maintained with ever increasing difficulty and sacrifices, and attended with diminishing results, fatally aggravated the public distress. The skill of Colbert had been taxed to the utmost to find means to support the first prodigious efforts, and the almost incredible waste of public treasure upon the gorgeous folly of Versailles, where forty millions sterling are said to have been sunk in an unprofitable conflict with nature. After the early death of that Minister, the finances fell into a state of frightful confusion. The magnitude of the calamity which befel France, when the Parliament of Paris failed to uphold the Declaration of the 24th of October, 1648, began to manifest itself in the most deplorable consequences, when an imperious Monarch, in whose hands all the powers of the State were concentrated, could no longer sustain the tottering fabric of his pride and ambition, except by cruel injustice to his people. The excessive burthens and the constant drain of war gradually crushed all the life of industry out of the miserable peasants, depopulated whole tracts of country, and stifled commercial enterprise. A multitude of useless offices were

every year created, in order to be sold, and abolished in order to be sold again. Titles of nobility, which had been borne for nearly a century, were suddenly revoked, and conferred again for fresh payments. Crown lands that had been alienated to reward service, or for other valuable consideration, in former reigns, were resumed and conveyed to new purchasers. It has been observed by De Tocqueville that if one of the subjects of the Great King had practised some of the financial expedients openly resorted to by his Sovereign, he would inevitably have found himself arraigned at the bar of Criminal Justice. The old local liberties died out throughout three parts of the realm, and survived with only a shadowy existence in the *pays d'état*. The royal Intendants and their subordinates assumed or controlled the administration of the provinces and the communes, even to the most trifling particulars. The cities of France had hitherto enjoyed the privilege of electing their own magistrates. Louis abolished this right of election, and exposed the municipal offices for sale. The nobles, stripped of all their ancient power, but with all their ancient privileges confirmed and augmented, were drawn to Court, to glitter in gilded servitude, the favoured servants of an absolute master.

But, notwithstanding their odious exemptions from public burthens, and their vexatious feudal exactions, the revenues of the nobles gradually melted away in profusion and luxury, until, in course of time, the vast majority of them, vegetating in privileged penury in their mouldering chateaux, became objects of contempt as well as of hatred to their nominal vassals.

The same policy which destroyed local liberties and centred all authority in the Sovereign, had the unforeseen and unwelcome effect of collecting all the energy and intellect of the country at Paris, which grew in extent and population with amazing rapidity. Louis, by repeated enactments, vainly endeavoured to check a development which excited his jealousy and alarm ; his own despotism created the revolutionary power which so mercilessly avenged on his posterity the evils of his rule, and laid his Monarchy in ruins.

This arbitrary system of personal Government, so pernicious to the State, exercised a still more baneful influence on the Church. The provision in the Concordat concluded at Bologna in the year 1516, which conferred on Francis I. and his successors the right of nominating to ecclesiastical benefices, had from the beginning been prolific of abuses detrimental to religion ; and the evil in-

creased with the gradual extinction of public liberty. Many of the French Bishops of the time of Louis XIV. showed a subserviency to the will of their Sovereign as complete as had been the subserviency of the English Bishops to Henry VIII. The question of the Gallican liberties, raised by Colbert, with the view of exalting the power of the Crown, meant in reality the servitude of the Gallican Church. Condé, a keen if cynical observer, remarked at the time that if Louis were to turn Mohammedan, the majority of his prelates would follow his example. The Catholic Church had owed her downfall in England mainly to the incredible cowardice and baseness of the Episcopacy, with the one noble exception of Cardinal Fisher. It was perhaps well for her stability in France that the French Monarch was a sincere and unswerving believer in her creed. In both cases servility to the temporal power was joined to religious intolerance. The English Bishops had had the impudence to send to the flames for theological error men more honest and blameless than themselves. The French Bishops promoted with zeal their Sovereign's indefensible measures against the Huguenots.

It was not, however, until long after the death of the Great King, until the ecclesiastical patron-

age of the realm passed through the hands of the Regent Orleans, and Madame de Pompadour, and Madame Dubarry, that it became evident how fatally injurious to religion was the political system which attained to maturity under his reign. When the nation awoke from the long, death-like torpor which followed the ruinous war of the Succession, to listen eagerly to the teachings of the Philosophers, the Church found herself exposed, through her close connexion with the State, to furious assaults, which the deadening influence of that connexion rendered her impotent to repel. Endowed with extensive possessions, which carried with them all the privileges of exemption from taxation, and of feudal service so odious and so onerous to the peasants; exacting from these, besides, the tenth part of their scanty incomes; her rich benefices filled with members of a privileged class, nominees of the Crown—the lives of some of whom cast greater ridicule on her doctrines than did all the malignant wit of the scoffers—the Church, instead of inspiring veneration and confidence in the people, became the chief object of their hatred and suspicion, and presented a vulnerable point to the atheistical shafts of Voltaire and the Encyclopædists. Illustrious, both before and since, for some of the

brightest luminaries and most fearless champions of the Christian faith, in the hour of her greatest peril, intellect and zeal seemed dead within her. No great spiritual chief arose, divinely-commissioned, from her faltering ranks to rekindle the fervour of religion, and scatter the terrible host of her enemies. Discredited and betrayed, she fell ingloriously; and Christianity fell with her, buried under a boiling flood of rancorous unbelief. That this catastrophe was attributable to the accidental circumstance that the clerical order formed a bulwark and a component part of a political system, demoralizing in itself, and hateful to the great majority of Frenchmen, rather than to any general revolt of French intelligence from Catholic dogmas, seems clear. When the old Monarchy and all its institutions had been swept away for ever, the Church not only erected herself again, but, being disencumbered of the temporal distinctions which had clung to her from feudal society, and despoiled of the wealth which had led to the perverting of her august functions into a profane masquerade, re-established herself in the heart of the nation, and vindicated her claims to divine authority with an intellectual power, a fruitfulness of conviction,

and a noble independence which she had not exhibited during the 18th century.

To anyone who considers impartially the condition of the vast majority of the French people during the 18th century ; ground down by the King, the nobles, and the clergy ; cherishing, in their wretchedness, envy and animosity towards the privileged orders ; held in pupilage by functionaries of the Crown, even to the most trivial details of their civil life, and of the exercise of their labour ; saturated with the ideas of theorists as deficient as themselves in practical knowledge of free institutions, but who proclaimed with marvellous wit and eloquence that the Catholic Church was an imposture, and that the galling inequalities of society were an outrage upon natural justice and the rights of man ; the frantic spirit of destruction and impiety, which amazed and horrified the world in 1793, becomes intelligible. Writers, whose opinions deserve respect, heap somewhat indiscriminating censure on the so-called principles of 1789, and seem to regard the epoch itself as the fountain-head of all the political and social changes, of an irreligious character, which the revolutionary propagandism has introduced throughout Europe. Some of the

principles asserted by the National Assembly, as, for instance, the equality of all citizens before the law, and the right of a nation to participate in the making of its laws, and in the imposing of its taxes, are founded in justice ; and although then announced, amidst triumphant pœans, as a new revelation to mankind, are as old as the most ancient, free, and well-governed communities of the world. Others tend to destroy the foundations of Christian society, and bear the stamp of the Godless intellects that gave them currency. But even these, no matter how widely scattered, would have borne comparatively little fruit, had they not found political and social conditions so eminently adapted to give them root and nourishment. The fact seems to be that the *ancien régime*, with its royal theory of divine right, borrowed from a narrow school of Protestant divines, and its pretensions to uphold religion and order, while undermining the authority of the Church, fostering class hatreds, and stifling the healthy life of political freedom, was more instrumental in disseminating the anarchical and Pagan ideas which, spreading from France, have infected the whole political and social life of Europe than all the Philosophers, Economists, and Apostles of Revolution put together.

In truth, the reverses that Christianity has suffered in Catholic countries, in recent times, must be chiefly ascribed to the lethargy that crept over the Catholic Church in her long connection with vicious forms of government. While she slept, the strongholds of opinion were surprised, and its weapons were wrested from her hands by the active zeal of her enemies. She awoke to the crash of systems and dynasties toppling into ruin, to find that the intelligence and the patriotism of nearly every Catholic land had become citadels of infidelity, and that the direction of modern thought had, in a great measure, escaped from her control. It was in those countries where free institutions, no matter how apparently hostile to it, flourished, that the Catholic principle continued vigorous and unconquerable. And it seems clear, that it is by recurring to her own ancient policy, which modern scepticism has so skilfully made its own; it is by means of independent efforts, in the domains of thought, to enlighten and guide the popular mind, by making her legitimate influence felt in political life through the sovereignty of the people—the only expression of divine right in temporal government which her theologians have ever accepted—that, humanly speaking, the Catholic

Church can recover the ground she has lost, and prevail in her present struggle of life and death against by far the most formidable alliance of intellect without faith, with power without conscience, she has been called upon to confront since the death of Julian the Apostate.

The piety that distinguished the latter half of Louis XIV.'s life was sincere and fervent; but, being impressed with the despotic character of the Monarch, it was perhaps more hurtful to his kingdom than the ostentatious profligacy of his youth had been. Not that his intolerance was exceptionally harsh. It certainly was not so ruthless as much of the Protestant intolerance of the time. The dragonnades which called forth loud cries of indignation from persecuting champions of religious liberty in neighbouring nations, were retaliation for an outbreak, stained with revolting cruelties. But, in banishing from his impoverished and depopulated kingdom a multitude of industrious citizens, gallant soldiers, and skilful officers, to augment the prosperity, and inflame with a deadlier rancour the opposition of his foes, for the offence of fidelity to their religious conviction, he sinned grievously against justice and sound policy. And a system of proselytism which used temporal motives to

coerce or to seduce the Huguenots into conformity with the established creed, sapped public morality, and directly promoted hypocrisy and scepticism.

Like the Massacre of St. Bartholomew, and the excesses of the Spanish Inquisition, with which Catholicism is so frequently taunted, Louis XIV.'s oppression of the Huguenots was the fruit of the jealous policy of a despotic Sovereign, not of the teaching of the Catholic Church. The Pope expressed his strong disapproval of the perverting influences brought to bear by the French Monarch on his Calvinist subjects, as being calculated to foster deceit and infidelity. It is, indeed, a historical fact, easily capable of proof, that the dealings of the Roman Inquisition with religious error in the Papal States, since the Reformation, bear favourable comparison, as regards lenity, with the proscriptions of the most tolerant Protestant power. And it should be remembered, that in a system based upon the doctrine of infallibility repression of dissent is not, what it is in systems based on freedom of judgment, a glaring violation of fundamental principle.

The censure of the Pope was only too well justified by the result. The campaign against

heresy, that culminated in the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, was in every way disastrous to the victors. Numerous anecdotes, floating about at the time, bore testimony to the low estimate formed even at the French Court of the sincerity of many of the fashionable conversions. A Huguenot family of some distinction, consisting of a brother and two sisters, had embraced the Catholic faith; the ladies through conviction, but their brother with the view of pushing his fortunes at Versailles. His conduct so displeased an uncle, a staunch follower of Calvin, from whom he had large expectations, that the old man at his death left all his possessions to more distant relatives. The brother wrote to condole with his sisters on their common misfortune. "You," he said, "who are pious Catholics, can solace your disappointment with the reflection that our uncle is now in eternal torments; but for me there does not remain even that consolation." On another occasion, when a Huguenot lady of celebrity, who had separated from her lord, became a Catholic, her friends ascribed the change to her strong desire never again to meet her husband, either in this world or in the next.

It would, however, be manifestly unjust to hold Louis XIV. personally responsible for all the evils

that flowed from his rule. His political education, the memories of his boyhood, the irresponsible position created for him by the policy of his predecessors, the splendour of his early prosperity, and the adulation of his people, had a pernicious influence upon an imperious and somewhat vain-glorious, but singularly noble nature. The great qualities of the Sovereign, however, only rendered his career a more striking proof of the radical badness of a system, that invested one man with absolute control over the lives and fortunes of so many millions of his fellow-creatures, and over the fate of generations yet unborn. The high praise is due principally to Louis himself, that perhaps there is no example in history of a reign equally long, and presenting such a heritage of troubled memories to the jealous vigilance of unbounded despotism, in which so little blood was shed on the scaffold for political offences.

If adversity be the true touchstone of greatness of soul, few Princes have stood the test so well as Louis XIV. In the days of his cloudless prosperity, when flushed with the insolence of victory, or drunk with the fumes of adulation, he may occasionally have forgotten he was a mere mortal. It is at the melancholy close of his career, when the declining glories of the great monarchy, which

had thrown surrounding nations into dim eclipse, were clouded by disaster; when the old King, having survived the great statesmen and generals of his prime, having survived three generations of his own descendants—his armies routed, his fleets destroyed, his treasury bankrupt, his people perishing from famine and pestilence, and uttering cries of anguish and despair, which he could only answer with tears of pity and remorse—confronted the ungenerous foes, who, having vanquished, insisted on dishonouring him, with a grand fortitude which half redeemed his fatal ambition—that he most commands our admiration.

The conduct of Louis towards the unfortunate James II. of England reflects a purer glory on his name than the most brilliant achievements of his arms or his policy. There was little in the character or proceedings of James to conciliate affection or esteem. Ordinary prudence, when the storm of invasion that overwhelmed him was yet sleeping in the distant thunder-cloud, ordinary firmness, when it had burst upon his kingdom, would, in all human probability, have saved his crown. Smitten, however, with the infatuation which seizes on those dynasties which Providence has doomed, he was deaf to the French King's warnings and proffers of aid, while the danger might have been warded

off, equally deaf to the voice of honour when it should have been boldly confronted. The imbecile recklessness with which he risked his throne was only to be equalled by the imbecile poltroonery through which he lost it. But from the moment James landed a fugitive upon the soil of France, Louis no longer saw the weak Sovereign. He saw only fallen majesty, which calamity had but scathed in order to sanctify, and whose blemishes it would have been sacrilege to scan too curiously. The noble friendship which shielded the last years of the ill-fated James, so chivalrous, so tender, which no reverses could weary, which no lapse of time nor considerations of interest could chill, is without parallel in history.

Of the Court of the Great King, at the period of its proudest splendour, Condé was one of the most brilliant ornaments. His martial genius and renown were pre-eminent, and circumstances had moulded the fiery leader of the Fronde into the most graceful and assiduous of courtiers. Louis, won by the Prince's great qualities, and his evident anxiety to obliterate the past, after a time distinguished his cousin in the highest degree by his confidence and favour.

In 1663 Condé married his son, the Duke of Enghien, to Anne of Bavaria, the daughter of his

old friend the Princess Palatine. The young lady had been adopted by her aunt, the Queen of Poland, and brought an immense dowry to her husband. When Louis attacked the Spanish Netherlands, in 1667, Condé was suffered to remain in retirement. But, in the following year, Louvois having quarrelled with Turenne, now Marshal-General of the Armies of France, the Prince, at the War Minister's suggestion, drew out a plan for the conquest of Franche Comté, and, being entrusted with its execution, over-ran and annexed the province in fourteen days.

In the war against Holland, in 1672, Condé commanded in chief, under the King, and planned the celebrated passage of the Rhine, which still lives in the Gallery of Victories at Versailles, on the canvas of Lebrun. Here he received his first dangerous wound, which incapacitated him for further service during the campaign; and what pained him more acutely, he saw his nephew, the young Duke of Longueville, the last of an illustrious race, killed by his side. It was to Louis' neglect of Condé's advice to march rapidly on Amsterdam that the Dutch commonwealth owed its escape from destruction. The time lost by the French Monarch in capturing second-rate towns, and in dictating humiliating terms of peace, gave his foes leisure to recover from their conster-

nation, and to cut their dykes. Spain, the Emperor, and several of the minor German powers came to the assistance of the States. England, on obtaining her demands, retired from the conflict; and France had to support alone the shock of a host of enemies.

In 1674 Condé sketched out a second plan of operations against Franche Compté, which resulted in the final incorporation of that territory with France. In the same year, with inferior forces, he won the great victory of Seneff over the Prince of Orange. Among his prisoners was Count Staremburg, who was sent to Rhiems, and there publicly drank the health of his late Commander. "The Prince of Orange is a man of honour," said the Count, "on whom I shall rely all my life; he promised me that I should drink champagne in Champagne, and you see that he has kept his word." When Condé returned to Versailles, Louis advanced to the head of the grand staircase to meet him. The Prince, a martyr to gout, slowly ascended the steps and entreated his Sovereign's pardon for making him wait. "My cousin," the King replied, "when one is so laden with laurels it is difficult to walk fast."

In the following year Turenne was killed in the lines of Stokhofen, as he was reconnoitering the position of the renowned General Montecuculi,

before fighting a decisive battle. His fall was mourned by friend and foe. "There," exclaimed his great antagonist, "died a man who did honour to man." Louis paid the memory of the illustrious Marshal the highest tribute it was in his power to render, by ordering his remains to be deposited at St. Denis among those of the Kings of France. The French Army, disheartened by the loss of its Commander, retreated in confusion across the Rhine, closely pursued by Montecuculi; and Condé was summoned in haste from Flanders to defend Alsace. On assuming this perilous command, he said, "How much I wish to converse only two hours with the shade of Turenne, so as to be able to follow the scope of his ideas." It almost seemed as if he had obtained his wish; so completely did he subordinate his own impetuous genius to the more cautious spirit that had guided the strategy of his old friend and rival. By skilful manœuvres he foiled the efforts of the Germans to penetrate into France, and finally compelled them to recross the Rhine. This was his last military service to his country. Although still hardly past the summer of life, the excesses and fatigues of his youth had brought upon him the decrepitude of old age. Severe attacks of gout distracted his mind and crippled his body. He therefore wisely judged that it was time for

him to retire under the shadow of his hard won laurels ; and at the close of his campaign against Montecuculi, he bade a final adieu to the profession of arms.

The prosperous tenour of the Prince's career since his reconciliation with his Sovereign had been chequered by two untoward events—one political, and one domestic. The throne of Poland having become vacant, an influential party in that kingdom solicited him to accept the crown. He was anxious to comply ; his election was scarcely doubtful ; but Louis refused his consent. Reasons of State policy were alleged ; but it is probable that some lingering distrust and jealousy of his cousin influenced the King's decision. Condé bowed to the will of his Sovereign with the unmurmuring obedience which had come to be regarded in France as the highest political virtue.

The second event has left a deep stain upon Condé's memory. The devoted love, the heroic courage, the extraordinary merits which the Princess of Condé displayed during the Bordeaux war, had failed to conciliate the affection of her husband, or the esteem of his family. And, through some distortion of nature, the son, who had been her joy and her solicitude during the vicissitudes of that remarkable struggle, became, when he grew up to manhood, the worst enemy of his mother.

Some words of menace and insult addressed to her in her own chamber by a footman named Duval, followed by a murderous assault, aroused vague suspicions. Unfortunately for her, it required only a breath to ripen suspicion into conviction in the minds of those who had the control of her destiny. A secret investigation was held by order of the King. At its termination the Princess was hurried into close confinement, and compelled to surrender her large patrimony to her son. Her prison was the stern old Castle of Chateauroux, in Berri, built in the tenth century, the same melancholy abode to which she had been exiled by Anne of Austria, before the war of Bordeaux. Louis shortly afterwards promised Condé that her imprisonment should be perpetual. Even in that day the belief in her innocence was general. The sober, searching light of time, which reveals much that is lost in the dazzling glare, or in the deep shadows of contemporaneous life, has established it more clearly. She appears to have been sacrificed to the dislike of her husband, the pride of his family, and the avarice of her unnatural son. In the sad solitude of her prison, Claire de Maillé completed the weary cycle of her existence. Her own family were all dead. The bitter blast of adversity killed her friends.

No ray of sympathy or of hope cheered the gloom of the long captivity in which her life slowly wasted away. Forgotten by all, more than twenty years rolled by before death, in unbarring her welcome passage from her living tomb to that where he reigns, reminded the world that she had existed. Even the grave could not shield her from injury. The evil fortune which had dogged her footsteps during life, pursued all of her it had power over, to her last resting-place. In after years her sepulchre was violated, and her dust was scattered to the winds. Truly, the story of this Princess, so gentle and so loving, so adorned by virtues and talents, and yet the victim of a relentless destiny, which sowed her path with sorrows, almost from the cradle to the grave, is one of the saddest recorded in history.

The evening of Condé's life was gilded by the rich glow of a splendid prosperity. The ruin which years of civil war, exile, and speculation had wrought in his immense revenues, was repaired by the able management of Gourville, to whose assistance he had recourse after his return to France. His time was passed chiefly at Chantilly—where art decked with its rarest gems the abounding charms of nature—in superintending the education of his grandchildren, in beautifying his

unrivalled gardens, and in the enjoyment of a brilliant society. It was his greatest pleasure to assemble around him eminent poets, painters, philosophers, and men of science, whose intellectual strife, the clashing of mind with mind, from which flashes of divine light, immortal ideas, emanate, he relished with the keen delight of kindred genius; and whom he loaded with benefits. His occasional visits to the Court were repaid by the distinguished favour of the King, and by the boundless admiration of the fair and the brave. In an age of licentiousness and impiety Condé had been notorious as a *roué* and a scoffer. And when that age had passed away his irreligious sentiments remained unchanged. His friends long despaired of his conversion. But the conversion of the Princess Palatine, who had herself declared that such an event would be the greatest of miracles; and, above all, the exemplary death of his sister, the Duchess of Longueville, after she had atoned by nearly thirty years of penitence for her excesses during the period of the Fronde, shattered the rind of scepticism that enfolded his heart. The springs of religion, which had seemed dried up within him, unsealed by a dread hand, burst forth again. And the promptings of his better nature were

strengthened by arguments which flowed, burning with divine fire, from the lips of Bossuet. After repeated conferences with the Bishop of Meaux, Condé, in 1685, publicly returned to the bosom of Christianity. His submission to the Church was a severe blow to infidels. Voltaire declares that age made a driveller of the hero of Rocroi. In the same year, his grandson, the Duke of Bourbon, married Mademoiselle de Nantes, one of the children of Louis XIV. and Madame de Montespan. The Duchess, not long afterwards, was attacked with small-pox at Fontainebleau. The old Prince hurried off from Chantilly, to watch by her sick couch, but the agitation and fatigue he underwent proved fatal to his debilitated frame. He died at Fontainebleau, in the sixty-fifth year of his age, penitent, and resigned, amidst universal regret, leaving behind him a name immortalised by his own great actions, and by the eloquence of Bossuet.

THE END.



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